

THE CIVILIZATION  
OF JAPAN

THE  
HOME UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE

Editors of  
THE HOME UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE

RT. HON. H. A. L. FISHER, F.R.S., LL.D., D.LITT.  
PROF. GILBERT MURRAY, F.B.A., LL.D., D.LITT.  
PROF. JULIAN S. HUXLEY, M.A., D.SC.

*For list of volumes in the Library,  
see end of book.*

# THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

*By*

J. INGRAM BRYAN

M.A., M.LITT., PH.D.

PROFESSOR FOR SIXTEEN YEARS IN JAPANESE COLLEGES;  
THE IMPERIAL ORDER OF THE SACRED TREASURE; MEMBER  
OF THE JAPAN SOCIETY; EXTENSION LECTURER FOR THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN JAPANESE HISTORY AND  
CIVILIZATION



LONDON

Thornton Butterworth Ltd

First Published . . . . . September 1927  
Reprinted . . . . . January 1936

*All Rights Reserved*  
MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

# CONTENTS

CHAP		PAGE
I	CIVILIZATION . . . . .	7
II	JAPANESE ORIGINS . . . . .	24
III	PREHISTORIC JAPAN (660 B C—A.D. 400)	39
IV	LAW, ETHICS AND RELIGION (A.D. 400— 600)	56
V	CONTINENTAL INFLUENCE (A.D. 600—700)	80
VI	NARA CIVILIZATION (A.D. 700—800)	106
VII	THE HEIAN ERA (A.D. 800—1200)	125
VIII	FEUDAL CIVILIZATION (A.D. 1200—1600)	149
IX	THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD (A.D. 1600—1868)	184
X	MODERN JAPAN . . . (A.D. 1868—1927)	213
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	253
	INDEX . . . . .	254

# THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

## CHAPTER I

### CIVILIZATION

CIVILIZATION was defined by Matthew Arnold to mean the humanization of society. It embraces, therefore, the intellectual, social and moral development of man. Civilization begins at that stage in human evolution where conscious reasoning in regard to the means of survival becomes actual. Man's humanizing was first apparent in his deliberate co-operation with nature and his fellows to provide subsistence and defence. With the first human impulse toward better things civilization had birth. Whether this impulse came from within or from without, and whether it was individual or social, are ques-

## 8 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

tions of importance in the study of civilization Capacity for social progress, above that of the brutes, must have been an original endowment in human evolution, else humanization would not have resulted

Civilization implies more than mental reaction to environment Of this even insects are capable Civility evidenced by regulated behaviour is no more than instinct without intellect It is only when intellect comes to the aid of instinct that conscious reasoning begins and civilization commences In the rise and progress of civilization intellect is paramount Yet history shows that intellect of itself is insufficient to ensure progress The humanization of society implies not only intellectual but moral development, since civilization involves the humanization of custom no less than the humanization of mind Society amasses its cultural experiences and transmits them with enrichment to posterity The civilization of a country means all the acquirements of human intelligence at

a given time. Consequently, to civilization, in any real sense of the word, progress is fundamental. Where successive generations leave society stationary, civilization is low, if not decadent.

Does the progress of civilization depend more on the individual or on society, or on the constant interaction of the one upon the other? Progress is obviously no less individual than social. Whether it begins with the individual or in the mass is a trite question. We know that without efficient leadership society becomes stagnant and deteriorates. Nevertheless civilization is concerned mainly with social relationships. It stands for the moral and intellectual improvement of man in society. Society is a community of civilized individuals. In this movement, however, the influence of the individual is vital, for it is the influence of individuals upon each other that produces civilization. Society is a union of individuals in a common aim, and the civilization they represent is the result of



## 10 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

their influence on one another. It is the sum of the results of individual influence on society. When such influence is beneficial, society is progressive; when it is injurious, it is retrograde or stationary.

What the highly civilized leader is to society, and highly civilized society is to a nation, a highly civilized nation may be to less advanced nations and peoples. The influences on which progress depends are not only national, but international. An isolated society does not develop so rapidly or wholesomely as a society in contact with others. Progress is accelerated under the stimulus of impact from without, especially when it comes into touch with communities of higher individuality and energy in thought and action. Deprived of such stimulus, society may become the victim of prejudice, suppressed freedom and originality, ingrained habit founded on mere fashion, convention or futile instinct of mere imitation, and, still more dangerous, become the victim of excess of wealth, with consequent extrava-

gance, dissipation, effeminacy and loss of moral fibre. The acid test of civilization is prosperity, when society accumulates the evils that arrest moral development, unless leadership is adequate to the situation. As soon as civilization ceases to produce and respect great leaders it reaches a crisis and invites invasion and conquest. Modern civilization is only too largely built on the ruins of former civilizations not to be a warning. But it is well that this should be so, rather than that aught of value in the past should be lost. Only those civilizations that aim to be the medium of the noblest that truth has revealed can hope for permanence. The more virile and hopeful civilizations are those that develop the imagination, and give first place to the poet, the prophet, the teacher and preacher, the inventor and worker, as against all forms of superstition and humbug.

In undertaking a brief critical survey of Japanese civilization, such are some of the more fundamental principles that must con-

## 12 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

stantly be kept in mind. The ultimate test of a civilization is its power to develop in the highest degree admirable character and personality. Though material advancement forms an essential element in civilization, it is only realized in proportion to the degree of mental and moral evolution experienced by society. All economic value is dependent on the moral and spiritual equation, for all economic failure is due to moral and spiritual failure. Hence the quality of a civilization can be safely measured by the material condition of the population it supports, or fails to support.

It is not enough, however, that a civilization should produce great leaders and teachers; it has to cultivate a readiness to heed them, if progress is to be assured. Nothing is more tragic in the history of civilization than the divorce between the individual and society, between the martyr and the mob, a fact which tends to throw emphasis all the more on the moral rather than on the intellectual factor in

civilization The history of dead nations goes to prove that the most brilliant achievements of the human intellect, and the utmost triumphs of political organization, were unable to avert national disaster, in the absence of more vital and permanent virtue Herein lurks a warning to modern nations whose civilizations reveal no virtues superior to those of ancient Greece and Rome

There is, of course, a decided contrast between ancient and modern ideals of civilization, a change largely due to Christian influence The fatal defect of ancient society was its lack of a conscious aim after real progress The absorbing ambition was acquirement of territory and the wealth and luxury that territory brings For the few life concentrated on power, privilege and pleasure, for the many, life concentrated on the mere elemental necessities of animal existence This frankly pagan ideal even Christendom has not wholly got rid of It is the dominance of a social conscience that fundamentally dis-

## 14 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

tinguishes a Christian from a pagan civilization. No civilization is wholly pagan, just as none is wholly Christian. Civilization is usually pagan in proportion as it looks to the past rather than to the future for the Golden Age. In a pagan civilization there are, for the most part, but two classes—superiors and inferiors. Superiors have rights, but no duties; inferiors have duties, but no rights. The inferior must remain in subservience to the superior, without regard to right or justice. This system of relations was exalted into a code of morals, if not a religion, in Confucianism, as it has recently been under Bolshevism, which is a new name for a very old state of society.

The difference between nations is never due so much to difference of race or blood or language as to difference of civilization. Nations enchained by the rigid conventions of antiquity, through lack of modern education, are unequal to the responsibilities of the world to-day. The difficulty is due more to environ-

ment than to brain and blood. It is the civilization rather than the racial mind that determines how a people will act. The main difference between peoples is, therefore, due to education. When it is remembered that the whole system of Oriental thought and religion for centuries has inclined to suppression of individuality and discouragement of personality, furthering the absorption of the individual in the mass, the subject in the State, the concrete in the abstract, the contrast to Occidental civilization is accounted for. In Oriental civilization the individual can succeed in rising above the mass only in defiance of society. True, if he can do this, he is accounted a hero and is worshipped as a god. Few have dared to do this, however, and these mostly by violence, and the result has been inimical to civilization. Absence of great personalities is the most distinctive weakness in Oriental civilizations. The more man becomes humanized the more prolific does civilization become in acute minds and con-

## 16 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

sequent inventive genius, increasing the wealth at man's disposal for his own emancipation from ignorance and tyranny, and for the improvement and embellishment of life. It is in this way that a civilization acquires the power of going on, and not to die. It is not by enforcing a creation of universal mediocrity that society develops, but by a free and constant mixing of inequalities.

Owing to isolation from world civilization, and left with only China for a model, Japan has been deprived of the advantage Europe enjoyed in the constant impact and interplay of civilizations through so many centuries. With the slow fusion of clans into nationality by force of war, Japan was long in attaining central government in any effective sense, but common custom and law in time began to dominate family and blood. After coming under Chinese influence, distinctions of caste and class become more marked, and social no less than political organization more complex, without any corresponding efficiency. A unity

of ideas rather than of race or blood seemed to characterize national institutions and manners. Divergent ideas which conspired for empire in the earlier history of Japan tended to coalesce in time, especially with the advent of Confucianism—the priest united with the warrior, the individual with the clan, democracy lost itself in aristocracy, until there were left only master and serf. This society, based on imitative instinct and custom, naturally lacked any creative principle.

It is clear from this that civilization depends much less on material than on mental and moral development. Man must have ethical equipment sufficient to use the means at his disposal for the improvement of society. But it is no less obvious that it is the material aspect of existence that brings thought into action. It is in his manipulation of material environment that man becomes moral. The earliest culture was cultivation of the earth and the utilization of its products and forces. It is an interesting fact that civilization did



## 18 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

not first develop in the tropics, where man had nature's gifts ready to hand, but in the temperate zones, where necessity, in greater degree, was the mother of invention. Extremes of heat or cold appear to discourage the accumulation of wealth essential to afford time for reflection and discovery. The Japanese are a blend of northern and southern bloods, with all the virtues and vices of these extremes, but they had the advantage of settling in a semi-tropical climate, where they found a fertile soil. Living at first as hunters and fishers, they soon began to cultivate rice, vegetables and fruits, and took to a largely vegetarian diet. In steady contact with savagery, and with a fickle and highly emotional temperament, progress in civilization was at first as slow as it was in government and national unity.

In Japan, as elsewhere, the influence of external nature left a permanent impression on civilization. For some time after the earlier migrations, politically, socially and

morally, the colonizers must have remained more or less in touch with their continental and oceanic relatives. The Izumo settlements, principally of Mongol and Chinese stock, were doubtless the more intellectual and commercial element, while the southern conquerors, the Yamato, were presumably the warriors and sailors of the population. Owing to ceaseless internal strife and division, Korea, the main medium in the new civilization, did not become the Italy of Asia. The love of seafaring life that marked early Yamato civilization did not give birth to the spirit of democracy so noticeable in ancient Greece. According to native mythology, Japan was created out of the sea. If islanders are reputedly more brave and adventurous than continentals, the Japanese should have their full share of such heroes. And their history shows that they have. Not only is there evidence of love for the sea, but much æsthetic appreciation of arboreal beauty, though the presence of wild beasts and savages retarded

## 20 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

the growth of regard for mountains and forests. The presence of numerous volcanoes, with alarming frequency of earthquakes, tended to emphasize the more violent aspects of nature in the native mind.

The less cheerful conceptions of nature, which land and sea life supplied to the early Japanese, were still further emphasized by gloomy views of nature and existence from China and India, where nature was the master rather than the servant of man. Thus the Yamato came to abandon the dynamic for the static view of nature and life, to the arresting of national progress. Great seismic upheavals, with consequent tidal waves, frequent typhoons and floods, all tended to confirm the new teaching about nature; and nature was but a revelation of the nature of deity. Superstition was rife in the crudest forms. Reason was at the mercy of imagination, and conscience the slave of both. Where reason is dominated by the imagination there is a remarkable development of the æsthetic

faculty, and a fondness for art is seen, thus forming a contrast to countries where nature is less impressive and the mind is more devoted to science. Devastating epidemics, pestilences and loathsome diseases also made the angry gods seem very near and dangerous, so that religion was given to gruesome sacrifices and propitiations. With the advent of Buddhism in the sixth century A D appeared milder deities, but none the less desirous of appeasement and practical suggestion. The incubus of the past clogged the wheels of progress.

Japan was kept in touch with Chinese and Indian ideas not only by instinct and origin but by necessity of intercourse arising out of trade and diplomacy. There was an exchange of products no less than of ideas. The history of civilization in all countries is very largely a record of commercial intercourse. Japanese civilization no less than our own, is a mosaic of elements, partly native and partly inherited. Yet Japanese civili-

zation has preserved a distinctive genius, due to the psychology of the people themselves. In the early history of the country progress was greatly retarded by constant infiltration of inferior bloods from the south, especially from the islands of the Pacific, as well as by civil strife through invasion and conquest, followed by centuries of military rivalry between great clans. When Jimmu Tenno, the first emperor, led his warriors northward and asserted his rule over Yamato in 660 B C, his jurisdiction extended over but a small part of the present empire. There is much evidence that portions known as Tsukushi, Koshi, Izumo and the Kwanto, retained more or less independence down to the tenth century. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the country suffered from repeated periods of anarchy and barbarism, which the influence of neither Chinese thought nor the Buddhist religion appeared able to stop or even to moderate. It is a most interesting fact that, after the brilliant progress of the

eighth and ninth centuries, there should have suddenly spread this decimating civil strife and anarchy in the provinces. It was, as we shall see, no more than a civilization of the upper classes, and did not touch, much less ameliorate, the ignorance and misery of the masses. After these years of civil war, feudalism, "the firstborn of barbarism," as Guizot calls it, became general throughout Japan; and, in spite of its pagan ideals and narrow loyalties, with rigid class distinctions, feudalism left some traces of progress in the direction of modern civilization.

## CHAPTER II

### JAPANESE ORIGINS

IN this brief survey and interpretation of the civilization of Japan the student's familiarity with the outlines and main facts of the nation's history must be taken for granted. Without such knowledge no account of Japan's civil evolution can be either understood or appreciated. Informative and authoritative works like the volumes by Murdoch, Brinkley and Longford are available to all who desire to gain a clear grasp of the principal facts and events from which the principles and processes here described have been deduced, and by which their truth must be tested.

While the history of Japan has been treated by reliable authorities, the nature of Japanese civilization has found no accurate or adequate interpreter, especially from a modern and

scientific point of view. It is one thing to know the facts of Japanese history, and quite another thing to interpret them. For this task it is necessary not only to have some knowledge of the principles of civilization in general, as well as of the civilization of Japan in particular, but also to have had a sufficient length of residence in the country, as a careful student of the people and their institutions, to be able to command a clear view of how the principles work out and reveal the genius of the civilization. To this aspect of the subject the author has devoted many of the best years of his life. As the main differences between peoples is not due to race or blood, but to their social and psychological history and education, it is obvious that a better knowledge of Japanese civilization is essential to peaceful and profitable relations with that country and the Far East.

However much Japan may be indebted to other nations for example and impetus towards a higher civilization, her own conception of



## 26 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

society is sufficiently original to make a special study of it more than ordinarily inviting to intelligence, for very few nations have so successfully developed and pursued their own principles, and practised them with greater independence of extraneous influences. Japan has imbibed less from Asia than England has from Europe, but whether that is to Japan's advantage remains to be seen. The particular attraction of our subject lies in the fact that Japan is almost an ideal example of unique racial progress. Consequently Japan presents a more valuable illustration of the natural law of human development than nations more indebted to alien instruction and example. Certainly, of all Asiatic countries, Japan is the one where, for the longest period, stable government has been most active in promoting the development of society. An insular position has enabled Japan's political, social and moral interests to form themselves out of their own proper needs, in the face of a firm and unyielding racial spirit always

insisting on adaptation to its own ideas and temperament But, however characteristic or independent Japanese civilization may prove to be, it must be appraised on its merits, like any other civilization A study of its ideals emerging to reality in government, society, national institutions, commerce, trade, industry, art, literature, religion, war and peace, will show the achievements and failures to which all civilization is liable

At the outset one cannot agree with those Japanese scholars who are wont to fancy their civilization so unique as to have come down from heaven with the gods who created and ruled the country, bequeathing to their children virtues superior to those of other nations Japanese civilization had its origin in Asia, if not in Africa, more particularly in China, and to a lesser degree in India through Buddhism, and for this reason it is advisable for the student to have some adequate knowledge of these Asiatic sources whence Japanese civilization arose, so as to

## 28 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

be able intelligently and accurately to estimate the initial impetus of which it had the important advantage. It is a distinct assistance to know what degree of social development the first settlers in Japan had reached before their arrival in the archipelago.

The Japanese are believed by the best authorities on anthropology and archæology to be of Mongol, Chinese, Malayan and Polynesian origin, with some traces of even Egyptian culture. But civilization is concerned not so much with race and blood as with psychology and culture. It is not so difficult to learn the conditions that prevailed at any given time in the regions of origin, as it is to know at what date the Yamato settlements on the islands began. All evidence, however, tends to indicate that the more important migrations arrived not long before the beginning of the Christian era. Japanese mythology would carry the foundation of the empire back to 660 B.C., but authentic history does not really begin for a thousand

years after that date, though, it must be admitted, archæology suggests the existence of a considerably developed civilization shortly before the opening of the Christian era. Among these early invaders of the islands are found traces not only of continental influence but also of influences from the islands of the Pacific. The very earliest elements of civilization in Japan were probably of Mongolian, Malayan or Egyptian origin, rather than Chinese. The latter influence is not distinctly traceable until after the Christian era. Certain ideas peculiar to all Asia are, however, noticeable.

The contest between race and culture, between biology and psychology, environment and heredity, finds some interesting and instructive illustrations in the history of Japanese civilization. On the whole it is seen to be a struggle in which environment and culture triumph over breeding and heredity generally. It proves that civilization is the result of cultural rather than of

racial stock. The cementing bond of the community is custom, law and religion, rather than race and family. In Japan it is custom and religion that constitute the domestic no less than the racial bond. Many heads of families are seen to be not blood relations of their respective houses, but they have the same customs and the same deities. Any civilization can become common to various races, according as environment and education decide. The Japanese are not one race, but a fusion of many into one civilization, and that not the civilization with which any of the ingredients began.

Starting with the archaic period, as evidenced by tradition and history in China, Korea and early Japan itself, the intellectual and moral condition of the early immigrants to the islands can be more or less accurately inferred, especially the place and effect of custom, law and religion as educative forces. There was in Japan a period that can only be called prehistoric as a civilization, since there is no

record of it apart from tradition supported by archæological evidence. Even after the commencement of authentic history in the fifth century A.D., and onward to the twelfth century, it was, as in Europe, a period mainly of origins: a time of active evolution of elements out of chaos, with some slight evidence of principles animating the mind and pointing to the formation of ideals. From the twelfth to the sixteenth century Japanese civilization passed through a period of experiment. There is constant clash of social and political forces, tending toward adjustment of ideas and a more stable form of society and government; but the process was not so harmoniously or so fully worked out as in contemporary Europe, and consequently society could not take so definite a form and move toward so definite an end.

Early Japan, like the rest of Asia, suffered from the absence of great and decisive events: there were no profound religious controversies creating a unity of ideals, as in Europe; no

## 32 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

crusades, no renaissance, no reformation, nothing save the calamities of pestilence, war and famine, the only events of continental proportions, which left civilization only the more emaciated. Contact with China was welcomed by the official class in Japan during the first thousand years of the Christian era, but with results that paralyzed free development of native society. Inter-course with Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was finally repulsed, with consequences inimical to Japanese civilization. Confucianism stereotyped, and Buddhism darkened, the Japanese mind, and to that extent arrested its natural development. Yet, as is usual in island empires, civilization developed more rapidly towards unity than in India and China, because society attained a greater degree of solidarity.

It is obvious from what has been said that the origin of a country's civilization is quite a distinct question from that of racial origin, or even the origin of language. The nature

of Japanese civilization, indeed, does little toward solving the mystery of racial origin, or of linguistic derivation either. Many nations have derived their language as well as their civilization from others. As our English ancestors came from all the more admirable races of Europe concentrating on the islands forming the extreme limits of the western continent, where they fused into one great race and nation, so the more virile and adventurous races of Asia and the Pacific, migrating along the lines of the temperate zones towards the limits of the continent, and along the vast coastline, concentrated on the Japanese archipelago, where they fused into the powerful and intelligent race known as the Nipponese. As the English imposed themselves and their language on the original as well as the other inhabitants of Britain, so did the Yamato on the other immigrants as well as on the aborigines.

Though the Japanese race has such a mixed ancestry, the language is one, sup



## 34 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

posedly the language of the dominant ingredient in the invading racial mixture. As we have indicated, the same thing happened in England, where the language shows Keltic, Danish, Norman and French influence, but is mainly Saxon or English. But the origin of the Japanese language cannot thus easily be traced. As it has little or no affinity with any other known tongue, it throws no light on the origin of the race. Contention ranges between a Turano-African and an Ural Altaic theory of origin, but between these there may possibly be no real contradiction, since both must ultimately go back to a common ancestry, probably in Egypt, or at least in Africa. If the Yamato who invaded and colonized Japan were of purely Asiatic origin, it is remarkable that their language shows no affinity with any Asiatic tongue. In vocabulary the Japanese vernacular has some words in common with the Bantu language, but the Asiatic element in it is clearly a later accretion. Some of the most learned anthropologists

have suggested Africa as not only the birth-place of the human race, but also of civilization itself. There was doubtless a migration of Turano-African stock across Asia or along the coast. That race was skilled in iron, which is found in Yamato dolmens. Of course the circumstances do not absolutely preclude an Asiatic origin for the language of Japan. The distance between the language of Japan and the languages of Asia is possibly not greater than that between English and Sanscrit.

Notwithstanding the claims of Japanese scholarship to the contrary, there is grave doubt whether Japan had any knowledge of writing before she learned it from China. Nor is there anything to indicate that the condition of the immigrants for centuries after their arrival in the islands was other than primitive, as may be inferred from the fact that it was not before the eighth century that there was any national capital. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, the nation's oldest

## 36 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

written records, compiled in the early part of the eighth century, reveal a very primitive state of civilization. Instead of passion, sublimity and a vigorous expression of imagination, there is only *naïveté*, mild sentiment and petty conceit, yet always an æsthetic appreciation of nature that is pleasing and full of promise. The *norito*, recited before the Shinto shrines, which were not collected until the ninth century, reveal a state of mind not above that of the Saxons in the time of Beowulf. There is, however, evidence of an advanced state of agriculture, which always indicates a civilization fairly well in process. But murder, vice, disease and insect plagues were common, as were the prayers and sacrifices for deliverance from them. There is evidence, too, of skill in navigation, by which the Yamato were enabled to reach and control the islands. The deification of the ruler, prominent in Egyptian society as well as various parts of Asia, is dimly seen in the Japan of this early period. All the dead were

regarded as gods, and ancestor worship was practised; but, in this life, only the ruler was regarded as divine. In this respect early Japanese society was distinctly opposed to that of China, where Confucianism taught that anyone sufficiently virtuous might become the head of the State, and that incapable rulers might well be dethroned.

As time goes on, Chinese influence becomes apparent, however, owing to the unsettled state of China, which induced waves of immigration to Japan, where distinguished foreigners were welcomed, and made valuable contributions to the advancement of civilization. The trade routes of Eastern Asia are as old as civilization, and influence from Egypt, Arabia, India and Malaya reached China and Japan long before the Christian era. At the same period the peoples of the Far East had more or less steady communication as far west as Parthia, Mesopotamia and Syria, as well as with Afghanistan and North India. During the first five centuries of the Christian

## 38 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

era there was a brisk trade in silk, iron, glass and other commodities between China and Rome; and iron, so essential to the Yamato swordsmith, arrived through Korea. Asia is a microcosm of mankind: there all the races of the earth are to be found; but by far the largest area of the vast continent is occupied by the yellow races, including China, Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaya and Japan.

## CHAPTER III

### PREHISTORIC JAPAN

(660 B C — A D 400)

FROM the dawn of Japanese civilization for some centuries we are aware of a barbaric element in constant conflict with a civil or continental element. It is difficult accurately to appraise the barbaric element, for the civil element has left no literature, not even commentaries like those of the Latins on the Germans, nor yet any evidence of laws such as those of the Visigoths and the Salic law in Europe. Was the barbarism of early Yamato an inheritance brought over with the first invaders or was it acquired by intermixture with the aborigines? Was it the wreck of an ancient civilization or merely an original and primitive culture? It is unfortunate that there was no one to depict the

primitive civilization of the early Yamato as Tacitus painted the condition of the Teutonic tribes of his day. It is even uncertain how far a settled agricultural life had prevailed over a nomadic and wandering existence. Nor is there enough evidence to indicate whether institutions and rights had created landed property, and whether social life had advanced sufficiently to suggest conceptions of liberty and individual security. Whatever civilization the first immigrants had, it is unlikely that they were able to impose it on the aboriginal Ainu more rapidly than the French did on the Indians in Canada, since, in the Yamato conquests, extermination or slavery was the only alternative for the aborigines.

For reliable information on early Yamato society we are dependent on Chinese and Korean records of that time, corroborated by Japanese archaeology and tradition. Before the sixth century A.D. the sole repository of Japanese annals were the *kataribe*, or minstrels,

who recited or sang the national legends based on supposed histories of sovereigns or great families. Having acquired the art of writing from China, tradition and legend began to be compiled into history, the *Kojiki* appearing under imperial auspices in A D 712, and a more extended account of national affairs in the *Nihongi* in A D 720. How much of these compilations is history and how much is myth can only be inferred by comparison with contemporary Chinese records. In some cases there is a serious discrepancy between the dates in the insular and the continental accounts. The national mythology, however, cannot be ignored, for if any real thought of the past is thus handed down, some knowledge of history and civilization may possibly be extracted.

In the pre Christian era the island empire was known to China as *Wado*, which probably meant Yamato, but later China used the more descriptive name of *Zip pan gu* which in the islands became Nippon meaning sunrise land



## 42 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

At first the various invading tribes had <sup>various</sup> names for the country, none of which meant the entire archipelago. According to Yamato cosmogony, the creation of the country was achieved by a male deity, Izanagi, who dipped his spear into the sea, and the drops that fell therefrom became the eight islands of Nippon. This may only mean that, as the invaders came over the sea, they saw the land gradually emerge before them, as if at the fiat of their chief, and when the leader's boat pole touched bottom, the country was his. The chieftain doubtless brought no wife with him and promptly took one from among the women of the islands, which gave rise to the legend of the female deity, Izanami, the mother of the archipelago. As in the Saxon conquest of England, so in Nippon there were, no doubt, numerous invasions one tribe following another, waging war and conquering territory.

Apparently there were two main streams of invasion, known as the northern and the

southern settlements. The southern invaders seem to have been the more militant, and finally moved aggressively against the northern settlements, sweeping all before them, until *Jimmu Tenno*, the first emperor, set up his capital in Yamato, 660 B.C. The date was probably much later, however. These puissant southerners came to be known as the *Tenshi*, or heavenly men, and so took precedence over all others in the ensuing government and civilization. *Tenshi* in modern Japan means the Emperor. Under the *Tenshi*, and next in rank, were the *Kunitsu*, or territorial chiefs. Later the imperial line came to be known as the *Kwobetsu*, and those under them as the *Shimbetsu*. In the Shinto pantheon the departed spirits of the *Kwobetsu* became the heavenly deities, or national gods, while the spirits of the *Shimbetsu* were called deities of earth, or the communal gods. The *Kwobetsu* were rulers, and their sons and daughters princes and princesses of the blood, the *Shimbetsu* were territorial chiefs.

## 44 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

who later ruled as Court nobles and feudal lords. Thus the first glimpse that we get of ordered society in Yamato is that of a great ruler surrounded by his subordinates. All authority was centred in the dominant chief, or ruler. Administrative and military functions later became divided, but members of the great families are found in each department such offices in time becoming hereditary. As the heads of the greater families, many of whom were his near relatives, often rivalled the ruler in ability and martial prowess, there was a constant tendency on their part to usurp administrative power. As this rudimentary administration, in manners, customs and institutions, is still Japanese in essence, it may be taken as a fairly accurate reflection of early Yamato society.

For the first five hundred years of Yamato occupation a great part of the islands remained under Ainu savagery, and the most distinguished Yamato warriors were always those most successful in subjugation or

extermination of the natives. As the Ainu were notoriously fond of alcohol, it was a common Yamato stratagem to pretend peace, give a banquet in celebration thereof, make the native chief intoxicated and then slay him in his cups, or, failing this, drink could be left within his reach, when he would be temporarily disabled. The civilization of the aborigines was severely primitive. Men and women lived together promiscuously. "There is no distinction of father and child," says the *Kojiki*. In winter they dwelt in pits in the earth or in caves under the cliff, many of which are still to be seen in Japan. In summer they preferred huts of bark or straw, the latter made from the bamboo grass of the hills. They clothed their bodies in skins in cold weather, in summer wore scarcely anything, and they were fond of drinking blood. When they received a favour they soon forgot it, but when they were injured they never failed to take revenge. In their topknots they carried arrows, and swords in

## 46 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

their girdles. We read that large numbers of Ainu were taken as prisoners in war and at once pressed into slavery. Centuries later we notice that Ainu were taken as presents to the Court of China, where the officials were much impressed by creatures of so hirsute an appearance. Ainu slaves are mentioned as being presented by warriors to the imperial Court of Japan, and some of these were used for burying alive with departed rulers. In later times a more conciliatory policy was observed toward these natives who submitted without fighting, and who agreed to pay tribute regularly.

How far the Yamato themselves were above the aborigines in civilization is a question more pertinent to our subject. It is only to be expected that social conditions were low, morality lax, jealousy rife and murder common. Homicide was an offence only of the lower against the higher. Ignorance of sanitation in so warm a climate led frequently to decimating pestilences. But the existence

of rice-fields, and other evidences of advanced agriculture, proves that civilization was well begun. As the natives were for the most part hunters, fishers and warriors, it is possible that agriculture was first introduced by the Yamato. That suicide was usual after defeat in battle only proves the desire to escape a worse fate. Men and women were on a plane of democratic equality, in strange contrast to the Japan of more civilized times. Men married their aunts, half-sisters and sisters without hesitation. Even imperial consorts were suspected of infidelity, and one at least was subjected to the boiling-water ordeal to ascertain the truth. The Yamato upper classes used silk mats and seal skin rugs, and the same materials presumably for robes. Their women wore jewellery and other personal adornment to a greater extent than in later Japan. The offices of priest and ruler were still united; and religious ceremonies were performed after battle.

To what extent Yamato was under the

influence of Chinese civilization during the prehistoric period remains uncertain. The general conviction of scholars is that if such influence was experienced before the Christian era it was inappreciable. It is obvious from Yamato mythology that there is little in common with the cosmogony of China, where there is no creator, as against the two deities that produced Nippon. But the mention of wine and chopsticks shows some acquaintance with the customs of China, though such terms may belong to the period when the records were compiled. The system of divination by cracks in a deer's roasted shoulder-blade doubtless came from China or Mongolia, but probably subsequent to the Christian era. The same may be said of the custom of putting into the mouths of Japanese rulers the speeches of Chinese emperors as original utterances. The imperial regalia of office, the Sacred Treasure of the sword, the mirror and the jewel, conferred by the gods on the first emperor, appear to be original with the

Yamato The mirror is said to be symbolic of the faithful reflection of truth, the jewel an emblem of grace and virtue, and the sword a symbol of courage and authority, but it is doubtful whether such ideas obtained at the time of the original bestowal of these treasures. They very possibly stand for the well known three principles of Japanese civilization the *lokutai*, or Heaven, Earth and Man, implying great righteousness, great glory and immortality.

It may be mentioned that archæology, anthropology and philology all unite in confirming the truth of the hypotheses here suggested. The archæological remains of Japan are numerous and valuable, they indicate the existence of two distinct cultures, with slight traces of a third. The neolithic period is well represented in finely chipped implements and weapons, but there is no trace of metal. In the many fine dolmens of the country we have evidence of a later culture of quite a different type, and these dolmens



## 50 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

have proved to be rich storehouses of objects illustrating the civilization immediately preceding the historic period. They abound in iron weapons, hard wheel-turned pottery, copper used in jewellery, arrow heads, bells, mirrors and utensils of the age of sepulture. Civilization was not everywhere uniform, for in the south there are indications of a bronze culture intervening between the stone and the iron ages. It is but natural that the primitive culture should be more pronounced in the north, where the aborigines were driven by the invaders, and where they held sway until comparatively recent times. Except for the presence of a love of cruel sport, in which they were not singular, there is no trace of paleolithic culture in the islands. It is probable that man first reached Japan in the neolithic period, as there are numerous evidences of this culture. The variety of pottery shows the presence of a still higher culture, and its gracefulness of contour suggests Chinese influence.

The bronze culture must have reached Japan before the arrival of the Yamato, because no trace of it is to be found in their dolmens, it is found only in the south of the islands, where it must have been left by invaders of Malayan or Chinese extraction. Bronze found elsewhere must have come direct from China. The pretentious dolmens of the country bear witness to the persistent presence of great warriors among the Yamato, which accounts for the long period before the attainment of national unity. The dolmens prove that Yamato civilization was able to produce iron weapons, as well as ornaments of gold and silver, revealing a high degree of art and skill. The spirits of the dead were believed to surround the living, and had to be propitiated to make them happy and prevent them being angered into doing mischief to the living, a faith still widely prevalent in Japan. All contact with dead bodies caused contamination, and all work involving such risk was assigned to slaves. The house

in which death took place had to be destroyed by fire. To avoid this the poor were taken out to die in the open air. In the case of emperors, not only was the death chamber destroyed and the palace itself abandoned, but the government was moved to a new capital. This was continued down to the eighth century A.D. Cremation was introduced later for disposal of the dead, as it lessened the risk of contamination, and enabled warriors to be brought home to the family shrine, where they could be apotheosized for worship.

It is probable that for at least a thousand years after the foundation of the empire there persisted not only an incessant struggle with the aboriginal inhabitants of the islands, but also between rival chiefs and upstart warlords, tending slowly to further fusion of clans as the weaker were absorbed in the stronger; but clan independence and jealousy continued to retard the progress of civilization for centuries: it is a conspicuous element in

Japanese civilization even now. At the beginning of the Christian era relations with China were steady and amicable, if not official. But Chinese influence seemed to have little or no effect on national policy in Yamato as yet. Administrative centralization continued to be imperfect; great families, especially those of imperial descent, remained practically independent; and some of them attempted to carry on communications with Korea and China on their own account. It was regarded as a great compliment to be recognized in even the slightest way by China; it added laurels to a warlord's coronet and lent impetus to his influence at Court. After the Chinese conquest of Korea in the second century B C, Korean leaders of distinction were driven for refuge to Japan, and came to occupy important places in the administration of the country. This welcome to distinguished foreigners has to be repeatedly noticed as a feature of Yamato civilization. In fact, naturalized foreigners were so numerous that

## 54 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

they became a special class, known as the *Bambetsu*, and were allowed to have a clan chief. It is probable that such foreigners were first welcomed as experts in politics, government, war, art and industry. No doubt it was through them that the arts and crafts of Korea and China became common in Japan.

The presence of China in the Korean peninsula caused alarm in Yamato, and a century or more later Japan sent an expedition into the peninsula, forcing one of its three kingdoms to pay tribute. Pirates from Yamato mercilessly plundered the coasts of Korea and China, and proved as cruel and insatiable as the Danes did along the English coast in King Ethelred's time. One of the kingdoms in Korea sided with the semi-independent warlords of Kyushu, and in retaliation Japan despatched an expedition to the peninsula in A.D. 192, under the auspices, if not the direct command, of the Empress Jingo. It is clear that from this time Yamato

controlled an important section of the coast of the southern portion of the peninsula, extracting tribute regularly, possibly by agreement to buy immunity from pirate raids. The importance of Yamato civilization may be seen from the fact that, in the year A D 364, Japan received contributions of books, articles of gold and silver and iron, either as imports or as tribute. It may be assumed that books would not be welcomed merely as curios, there was probably some scholar who could read them. Nor has Japan ever ceased to be politically and territorially interested in the peninsula, great Korean families like the Tajima have left a permanent mark on Japanese civilization. The connection thus early established, though often broken in reality, has remained unbroken nominally, the claim has never been relinquished, with the result that centuries later, in the year 1910, Japan formally annexed the peninsula.

## CHAPTER IV

### LAW, ETHICS AND RELIGION

(A D. 400—600)

EVOLUTION of social order and civil administration in Yamato, during the centuries after the opening of the Christian era, was naturally slow and uneven. And yet it was only as the sorely divided provinces, or fiefs, advanced toward ordered authority in law, ethics and religion that civilization could be assured of progress. During this period Yamato civilization did not acquire many of the auxiliaries that Japan has since added to her life. If the State is the product of the moral will of man, Yamato at the dawn of authentic history was still far below Plato's ideal as "a partnership in the life of virtue." It was much more like Hegel's conception of the Teutonic state, an incarnation of the will

of one decreeing individual, except that Yamato continued to be afflicted with too many decreeing individuals. The weakness of primitive man lay in his inability to organize his tribes and clans into a state with sufficient cohesion to be permanent. Japan did not achieve such unity until the thirteenth century.

*Successive waves of invasion from Roman, Saxon, Dane and Norman* tended to fuse the English into nationality, with a gradually increasing stability of law and order, but in Yamato the different incursions of alien tribes appear to have only retarded such achievement. In sheer self-defence tribes were absorbed into clans, forming great families, and very early the family became the unity of society, but it was a family that included all the individuals under the same clan chief and worshipping the same clan deity. It was a bond of religion rather than of blood. Headship at first was decided by heroism, mainly in war, which in time gave rise to caste, or the hereditary determination



## 58 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

of man's place in society. The three most prominent classes in Yamato society continued to be the *Kiobetsu*, the imperial family and their descendants, the *Shimbetsu*, or descendants of those who came over to Yamato with the imperial family, and then the *Bambetsu*, or great families of foreign descent, noble Koreans or Chinese. On account of their polygamous proclivities, the progeny of these greater families extended so rapidly as at times to get beyond control, hence arose family rivalry, defiance of law and authority, and often conditions were simply anarchical. Families like the Sukune, Soga, Kamatari, Taira and Minamoto, who dominated the empire in turn, were like the *gens amilia* and the *gens carlia* of Italy, only they were not all of mythical descent. Their main distinction lay in their worship of distinct ancestors, who nevertheless in some cases were blood relatives. It is, moreover, too often noticeable that the more distant a clan chief lived from the central govern-

ment, the more he displayed a disposition to be independent of it. Some of the great clan chiefs of Kyushu were not unlike the semi independent Norman barons of England and Scotland. These southern chieftains, as has been already indicated, showed a persistent tendency to intrigue with Korean states for independence of Yamato authority, and their pretentious dolmens prove that they even aped royalty, a fact mentioned in the *Nihongi* for the year A.D. 583. Yet each of these clan centres must be regarded as nucleus of evolution toward civilization while securing for the clan leader some semblance of authority over the anonymous multitude.

In the rise and development of civilization in Japan it is obvious that the clan exercised a *greater influence at first than the central government itself*. As the earliest social organism, the family became not only the unit of society, but out of it arose the principles on which rested the social fabric and even the State itself, as in ancient Greece. Per-

petuation of the family came to be one of the most important of social and even of religious duties. This obligation arose out of duty to the State, to the clan and to the spirits of the departed. Every family had to produce a male heir to become its head. The condition of the living depended on their devotion to the dead. Since only males could succeed to headship of the family, boys enjoyed a social and religious advantage over girls, and this prominent feature of early Yamato society still obtains to some extent. Women existed mainly for the procreation of children, and for the pleasure of men. If there were more children than could be supported, the girls were abandoned to exposure. But the sun goddess, Amaterasu-no mikami, was the original mother of the nation, and woman was always regarded as transmitting the sacred flame of family life in propitiation of the ancestral deities. She still does deputy for her men folk in daily worship at the ancestral altars. In this

early period women were often scarce, owing to exposure of female children through poverty, boys had to be preferred as potential fighters and family defenders. Raids on neighbouring clans to obtain women were common. Later, women were purchased by one tribe from another, and sometimes to improve the breed. No marriage ceremony was necessary, and there is little indication of affection or even attachment. Respect and value belonged to the family rather than to the individual. Callousness and needless suffering and cruelty seem to have been almost universal. Barbarous treatment of the weak by the strong was accounted nothing unusual, it was mercy or kindness that constituted distinction, but not frequently. In this, of course, Yamato civilization was not inferior to contemporary society in Europe. Weeding out the weak was supposed to strengthen the clan, but history proves that it is no use to strengthen the race physically if thereby it is weakened morally. But the exposure

of infancy and of old age, as has been suggested, was not wholly due to absence of human sentiment, but often to purposes of utility or economy. It is noticeable, further, that human sacrifices, a feature of early Yamato religion, give way to animal sacrifices as men come to be of more value in war, and as animals come to be of value as food, or for labour, they are supplanted by symbols as offerings to the gods. In the history of civilization everywhere it is remarkable how all deities can conveniently be put off with symbols for realities. In all departments of Japanese society the substitution of nominality for reality has reached a high state of refinement.

If the emergence of civilization is from family life, it must have been fostered by impact from without, in the higher classes migrating to the country, or invading it, there were doubtless some conceptions of civil life. Uncivilized tribes may combine from the gregariousness of their nature, or

from association by blood, or from accidental proximity, but no combination or amalgamation of the savage can produce the civilized. Civilized communities are marked off from barbaric by signs of intellectual and moral progress, they betray closer union and more orderly disposition of component parts, no less than a common aim in search of a common development. We have seen that Yamato society had clearly emerged from the barbaric stage, but not very far. The weight of probability inclines to the theory that it was largely an inheritance from without.

The head of the clan, or *uji*, known as the *uji no Iami*, ruled the *uji* and controlled its property, he governed all the households composing the *uji*, and all the heads of smaller and subservient *uji* as well. The lesser families were obliged to consult the greater in case of dispute, all instructions being given through the chief. The smaller families had fixed occupations, such as gem polishers, boat builders, carpenters, smiths

## 64 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

and farmers. The emperor could at will create a new family, or *uji*, for distinguished services. The class known as the *tomobé* at first had no *uji*, most of them were toilers or serfs, though when they became prominent in war they founded the *samurai* class. All serfs and slaves were attached to some family. Experts of all kinds imported from the continent came under the headship of the foreign *uji*. Slavery was a conspicuous institution in the Yamato society of this period. The first slaves were prisoners of war, or subjects penalized for certain offences, so long as a living man was more useful than a dead one, the criminal was not executed, but sent into slavery. This was one of the severest and yet most common penalties for high class offenders, the victim had not only to lose his family status, but also to suffer confiscation of his estates. But most of the slave population was recruited in wars with the aborigines, and by raids on the Korean and Chinese coasts. By this system the feudal

chiefs were enabled inexpensively to cultivate the greater portion of their landed estates. The present *eta*, or pariahs of Japanese society, are supposed to have descended from this slave population

The wealth of the great clan chiefs consisted mainly in lands and their products. Much of their land, as well as the slaves upon it, was acquired by conquest of the aborigines. Greater families often let their lands to lesser families, collecting a percentage of the produce, presenting the imperial Court with what they thought proper, and retaining the rest. The imperial Court and the central government were not wholly dependent on contributions from the provincial lords, for the Crown lands brought in a considerable revenue. But as the estates of the great landowners had been acquired by conquest, and were therefore exempt from taxation, they could rent them to tenants at a much lower rate than was charged for the imperial estates. The consequence was that tenants were drawn from



the government lands to the clan lands, with the result that the Court and the central government were greatly impoverished, and had to raise funds at exorbitant interest in order to exist. It will be seen later that this diversion of taxes from the imperial treasury to the treasuries of the provincial lords so weakened the central government as to shift the centre of authority by dividing it among the nobles. The ruler, however, nominally represented all the *uji* in inter-clan affairs, and the chiefs were supposed to deal with each other through the imperial Court, though they did not always respect this rule. The shogun arrogated to himself this imperial prerogative in later times.

It is noticeable that in the fifth century A.D. there arose great confusion as to the rights and lineage of certain families, because so many had gained ascendancy by exploiting the aborigines, and even their Yamato nationals, that they had reached family headship without lawful authority from the

imperial Court To detect spurious claims to rank and title, the government ordered the hot water ordeal, which eliminated a considerable number of the claimants In A D 463 all the members of a certain *uji*, some seventy in number, were executed because they indulged in games where the image of the emperor was used in a common or disrespectful manner In a civilization where all images were those of deities, that of the ruler, himself divine, was sacrosanct, as it still is, for even now in Japan the imperial image is not allowed on postage stamps, lest it should be treated with irreverence In Yamato society, officially and socially, lineage counted above everything, all offices and honours were in the hands of the imperial Court, which distributed them through the clan chiefs, down to the sixth century Though the masses were accounted as chattels by the classes, the common folk were not always any more meekly subservient than they are to day, this may be inferred from

## 68 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

the trouble which arose among the fishermen in A.D. 310, when the penalty imposed on the offenders was that of being obliged to construct and present to the nation a ship 100 feet in length. There is mention of Korean shipwrights being brought over, obviously to improve naval architecture; and a certain degree of idealism can be detected in the making of a flute from the wood of a famous ship of Korean build, that was broken up, the flute giving out "a note that could be heard afar," inspiring even the emperor to compose an ode in which the music of the flute is described as like the sighing of the wind in summer trees.

In spite of the evidence of too much independence among the clan chiefs, it is quite clear that from this time onward monarchy was to remain the central embodiment of national authority and government. There is reason to believe that the monarchical idea arose out of the family or the clan, the first ruler being the greatest of the clan chiefs.

Sovereignty is first despotic, then oligarchic and finally patriarchal, but in Japan always absolute. Quite early in their intercourse with China the Yamato imitated the custom of that country in giving each imperial reign a *nengo*, or poetic name, signifying the spirit of the period, a practice continued down to the present day. The era beginning with the accession to the throne of the Emperor Hirohito in 1926 was named the *Shōwa* era, the word meaning "radiant peace." There was one ruler whose chief sport was in sending men up trees that he might take pot shots at them with arrows; and his reign was entitled "great wickedness," so that the custom was not always less true to life for being poetic. But other sovereigns were no less distinguished for their humanity, and their reigns were named accordingly. Loyalty, however, was to the clan or chief rather than to the State or the emperor. At the earliest period we find the ruler chosen by members of the imperial family, but always from their own

relatives. Later the throne became hereditary and finally the rule of primogeniture was adopted. It was always the Yamato creed that the emperors were descended from the gods, as the Gothic kings were from Odin, and the kings in Homer from the Greek deities. The State then, as now, was a theocracy under the rule of the priest-king, who was the head of the national religion. Official connection with deity was doubtless supposed to lend authority to sovereignty. The Roman kings were also believed to enjoy special communion with the gods; and in Greece, too, the king had sacrificial functions. In Japan the ruler combined all religious, judicial, legislative and executive powers in himself from the first. To avoid despotism there was always some counter authority, like a great clan chief, the Court nobles and, later, the shogun. In Japan royalty has proved more flexible than in Europe, with its constant succession of dynasties; and the imperial house of Japan up to the present shows a

greater indication of permanency than any monarchy in Europe. The ruler of Japan has never had a crown, nor has he ever required any religious or official sanction or authority beyond himself, since he is of direct divine descent. With the increasing influence of Confucianism, and also of Buddhism, in later years, this principle suffered serious violation, the sovereign was forced into seclusion, and had to take an almost secondary position to the dominant family, but we shall see that, with the revival of Shinto, the old position was reasserted and the ruler returned to his first position as the Son of Heaven in effect no less than in name.

The ethical implications of Yamato civilization at this period are as decidedly weak as they were in the former period. The ruler is admittedly supreme, and there is some degree of political organization, but all rule is based on military force rather than on law and justice. Cruelty, vice and general inhumanity continued to prevail as before.

## 72 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

Emperors came to the throne by assassinating their own brothers, the rulers and the higher classes generally were apparently given over to amorous and polygamous habits and even pastimes. Men just took the women they wanted, if they could. Marriage was in no degree sacred. A sense of modesty was not highly developed. Morality was still based wholly on custom, always that of the clan. The imperial harem continued to produce more children than could be provided with places worthy of their birth. Some of these became provincial governors, and founded imperial branch families that endangered the unity of the State. One emperor had eighty children from seven wives. Provincial governors were obliged to send one pretty damsel annually to the imperial Court. It cannot, of course, be assumed that if the upper classes were so immoral, the lower classes were still more so. In taste and habits there was practically no difference morally between men and the deities they

worshipped. The gods were creations of the human brain.

The national deities, like their creators and worshippers, were at first content to live in the open, and to receive worship and the customary propitiations from altars under the blue sky, but, as their worshippers began to increase in wealth and to prefer more pretentious mansions for dwellings, the gods grew envious and insisted on more imposing temples and shrines, for they too had abandoned their nomadic habits. But the deities of Nippon have always been satisfied with less gorgeous shrines than those of Europe. With the lapse of time the gods appear to have grown also more humane. An emperor distinguished himself by abolishing *junshi*, the custom of burying alive some of the ruler's dependents with him, this emperor declared that he could not endure the wails of the victims thus buried up to their necks at the mausoleum of his late father. But belief in the malign influence of offended deities per-



sisted, and there are instances of beautiful maidens being offered a living sacrifice in appeasement of angry gods. In the casting of sacred bells, too, a human being was not infrequently thrown into the molten metal to improve the tone of the bell. In excavation of some ancient foundations recently in Tokyo human skeletons were found, obviously the remains of victims placed under the building to ensure its protection by deities. It was a civilization in which imperial personages could be guilty of the most dastardly deeds and yet pursue their careers uninterrupted. Yet along with this, we have accounts of rulers as humane as could be expected, and one is singled out for distinction on the score of his having remitted taxes in a bad year for those unable to pay. The significance of imperial conduct lay mainly in the dangerous precedents that were created, and which became a snare later to unscrupulous clan chiefs, who yet could regard their conduct as no more objectionable than that of the sovereign. The principle of loyalty was in all cases so rigorously in

sisted upon that a retainer who assassinated his lord was put to death by those who instigated him to do the deed, lest they should share the victim's guilt.

In getting rid of rivals, and participation in atrocities generally, the emperor Yurayaku (457-479) was the Richard III of his time; nor was he without the domestic affinities of a Henry VIII. But he once met a lady who was his match, and so little afraid of him that she not only repulsed his advances, but sent the following reply to his proposal that she should enter his harem. "*Thou, my lord, art much given to violence and sudden fits of anger, so that one who sees thee in the morning is slain in the evening, and one who sees thee in the evening is slain before morning. Now, thy handmaiden's countenance is not distinguished for beauty, nor her mind for ability. If she should not in manner of speech come up to thy princely expectations, how shouldst thou welcome her to intimacy?*"

In spite of the brutality with which women were only too often treated, woman at this

## 76 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

period occupied a more prominent and honourable position than she did after Confucianism and Buddhism began to undermine her place in society. Beginning with the empress Jingo, who led an expedition to Korea, for nearly a thousand years of Japanese history woman occupied not infrequently a prominent place in all walks of life. She had, however, to face the injustice and cruelty to which all were exposed in that early society. The wicked ruler above mentioned had a maiden nailed to a tree and burnt for misplaced affection, he was accustomed to cut down men simply to appropriate their wives, if he took a fancy to them. He ordered one of his stewards to be killed for not knowing how to dress a stag to his master's taste at a hunting party. Many of the pleasures of this period are unprintable. Society was constantly marred by dark tales of fierce *vendetta*, for the relatives of a family were in duty bound to avenge an injury to any of its members. The Confucian doctrine that no honourable man could live under the same heaven with his father's

enemy was readily accepted and rigidly practised. The women were as revengeful as the men. Though some of the temples had vestal virgins, chastity was never a Yamato ideal. All the forces of nature were deified. Phallic worship persisted down to comparatively recent times. Religion had no essential connection with morality in the modern sense. It was simply a device to evade the penalties of the gods. Morality had not yet come to imply a disinterested performance of self imposed duties.

With increasing intercourse with China came the Buddhist missionaries in A.D. 522, after which the Sinoization of society was rapid and distinctive. Japan remained nominally a theocracy, but gradually more and more in the Chinese sense. Buddhism could not readily place the State above religion, nor the ruler above the priest, but it conveniently could admit that the ruler on earth was an incarnation of the gods in heaven. As the ruler was more concerned with penalties for transgressions than with rewards for virtue,

the gods whom he represented were the same. Notwithstanding the milder doctrines and deities of the new faith, the gods continued to be gruesome and inhuman in their demands and imposed duties. Nor did the new religion become other than a device to placate angry deity. Shinto confined the operations of religion to this life, but Buddhism carried the campaign into the life beyond, and claimed to control the doings of deity there as well as here. At first, and for nearly two centuries, there was incessant opposition to the Indian faith, carried on specially by the priests of the old faith, but by a shrewd system of compromise, whereby the native deities were accepted as avatars of Buddha, the breach was healed and the national pantheon left undisturbed. The appeal was mainly to the higher circles of society at first, for it was considered a compliment to belong to a religion accepted by the emperor of China. When the emperor of Japan became an adherent of the new faith, its future in the country was assured.

## LAW, ETHICS AND RELIGION 79

Buddhism changed the whole outlook of Japanese civilization by persuading men that life was an illusion, the good as well as the evil. It did not much matter what people did when it was unreal. Nothing mattered except strict obedience to one's superiors. The new religion, moreover, caused a re-interpretation of Japanese history, so coloured by mythic and monastic ideas that it is now very difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. The public mind became diverted from politics and patriotism to theology and superstition, from practical action to vague introspection, from prophets to priests, until the good of the community counted for little compared with attention to religious devices and devotions to escape the effects of *kharma*. The centre of gravity was shifted to another world, and this was left to go its way to perdition. Thus ties of family and State were loosed, until the structure of society tended to dissolve into its original elements.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTINENTAL INFLUENCE

(A.D. 600—700)

AFTER the advent of Buddhism, intercourse with China steadily increased and some radical changes rapidly became evident in Yamato civilization. It is recorded that Fa-H'sien, a Chinese Buddhist priest, travelled to India between A.D. 399 and 414, which indicates a degree of communication between the Far East and the rest of Asia that must have extended to Japan also at that time, bringing with it not only the teaching of the new religion, but also the customs, art and literature of China and India. Utensils and objects of art treasured in the Shōsō-in Museum at Nara, many of which are older than the seventh century A.D., reveal a degree of skill and grace representative of a civilization

that must have been highly developed at least a thousand years before. Such creative attainment does not appear suddenly in any civilization, but is preceded by centuries of preparation.

The transition from savagery to civilization is invariably marked by conceptions of science and art that are the germs of all future progress. As soon as we know that the magician, the medicine-man, the sorcerer and the priest begin to give way to a more accurate knowledge of nature and life, we expect society to evince a more decided improvement. Man then becomes more expert in the manipulation of nature in his own interest. Even belief in demons and other cruel deities, no less than credulity in regard to charms and talismans, betrays faith in a potentiality of nature not yet at man's command. We have seen that contact with material nature enabled the early inhabitants of the islands to produce well made implements of stone and flint, and that even



## 82 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

at the dawn of Yamato civilization the beginnings of art are visible in the weapons of war and peace. Archaeology affords ample evidence of an active intellect at work from the earliest time. When the club, the axe, the chisel and the bow are found to be in use, further advancement is assured. The dolmens show that the Yamato were great horsemen, they highly ornamented their stirrups, bridle bits and harness trappings. Though the materials for bronze and iron objects must have come from the continent, some of the objects themselves were certainly made in Japan. The stress of finding sustenance, and the frequent necessity of war, forced circumspection, courage, self denial and inventive energy on minds that might otherwise have remained primitive. Racial and national unity was not promoted without much cruelty, and even a prolonged period of inhumanity. Hachiman, the apotheosized spirit of the emperor Ojin, became the Yamato god of war, with a more

regarded as an enemy if not a barbarian. Extreme views in this respect must not be pressed, however, for the Yamato accorded a warmer welcome to aliens than was usual in contemporary Europe, especially if equipped with some expertness that could make them useful.

The favourite viands of this age appear to have been venison, the wild boar and the flesh of birds. Horses and cattle were too scarce and too valuable to be eaten. Among vegetables, the raddish, cabbage, lotus, melon, garlic and seaweed were eaten, rice and rice-wine were introduced from China. As agriculture began to prove more profitable and sustaining than hunting and plunder, war declined. Buddhism at first insisted on a vegetarian diet, but found a national fondness for wild boar meat so impossible to obviate that it was at last allowed to pass under the name of "mountain whale," by which name it is still frequently described. The Buddhist aversion to a meat diet, lest one might be

killing and eating a reincarnation of one's own friends or relatives, did much to promote agriculture, but the influence of the new religion was seen still more prominently in the higher forms of art in pottery, porcelain, brass, bronze, silk brocades and other accessories of temple worship and ceremonial. State officials, from the ruler downwards, began to emulate the priestly vestments, in private dress as well as in domestic utensils and ornaments, until their mansions outshone the shrines in grandeur of furniture and architecture. From the art of writing emerged the art of painting. Experts in weaving, pottery and painting were constantly imported from China, at first for religious purposes, but later for embellishing the establishments of the great. Sericulture became the interest of all classes, even empresses set the nation an example in the raising of silk worms. But the greater part of the islands continued to be covered by vast forests in which wolves, bears, monkeys, giant lizards and fierce aborigines freely roamed.

While there is ample evidence of progress in the amenities of daily life, there is an ominous absence of proof that language and literature were making much progress, the slow development of these indicates that the development of civilization itself must have been still uncertain. After the fifth century A D Chinese ideographs became the ordinary means of writing. At first the composition itself was in Chinese, and could be read, of course, only by scholars. The first written records were doubtless the work of scribes brought over from Korea and China, and employed as government officials. In time attempts were made to write the Japanese vernacular in the alien ideographs. Choosing a Chinese ideograph for the corresponding Japanese word, the Japanese pronunciation was given to it. Of course the ideographs were arranged in the order of the Japanese sentence. Only those familiar with the original meaning of the ideographs could read, but all who heard could understand. This use of

alien ideographs for the native vocabulary and composition presented a very complicated problem, that it was so successfully solved proves no small degree of intelligence. Though a native syllabary was invented later to indicate the right pronunciation of the ideographs, scholars continued to write in Chinese rather than in the vernacular, for the same reason that English scholars continued to write in Latin long after the native language had taken a distinct literary form. It was supposed that real literature was impossible in the vernacular. A similar conviction obtained in early Japan and greatly retarded the development of a national literature.

Since the more developed a culture becomes, the more readily does it create greater copiousness of expression in language we are forced to conclude that the civilization of this period was somewhat uneven. Already can be detected a fundamental difference between the psychology of the Aryan and the Oriental, the language of sight and the language of

sound Of course all words at the beginning were pictures, they had a sensuous significance appealing to the eye There was no term that was not primitively the sign of an object belonging to the common stock of shapes and colours, sounds and scents But Occidental civilization was able to advance from sight to sound in writing, a change that was fundamental to more rapid development in civilization, since by an alphabet of twenty six letters every sound of the thousands of oriental ideographs can be expressed But Japanese no less than Chinese psychology is so inveterately opposed to sound in favour of sight, that the eye language dominates the ear language, and the written language remains quite different from the spoken In Japan for some time there has been a movement for the adoption of roman letters to express the native speech, but it makes little headway, and remains about as popular as societies for simplified spelling in English speaking countries Yet the vernacular press

is exercising a decided influence in merging the written into the spoken language in Japan

The earliest form of literature in Japan was poetry, which appears to have been the art of minstrels, and later of the leisured class. *From the beginning Japanese poetry has been unique in form, being without rhyme, alliteration and accent. It is a five-lined stanza, of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 syllables each, or thirty one syllables in all. Popular ditties may vary a little from this mode, but nothing in the way of genuine poetry worthy of the national muse can appear in any other than the standard tanka or waka measure, as it is called. Competitions in verse-making have been favourite pastimes of the imperial Court from this period down to the present time, and imperial poetry symposiums are still held in the imperial Court at Tokyo to celebrate the New Year festival. It is remarkable that, for an agile and military nation, the Japanese should have been from the earliest times more fond of indoor than of outdoor sports and*

pastimes The desire for play as a means of killing time, when he could kill nothing else, must have pressed heavily on the mind of primitive man Possibly it was Buddhism that diverted the nation from physical to mental gymnastics Besides poetic competitions, the official class in Japan was given to gambling contests, singing, dancing, cock-fighting, dog fighting, wrestling and archery, there was also kite flying in season, as well as a kind of football in which the winner was he who could keep the ball longest off the ground Hunting was naturally the sport of the military class It is still a favourite form of recreation in the upper circles of Japanese society Music, so important to Plato as an educative force in an ideal state, had less satisfactory results in Japan no less than in China In both Shinto and Buddhism dancing and music were, and still are, used in worship It is difficult from the nature of the music to decide whether it is used to please the gods, or to frighten away the



demons whose presence always annoys deity. It was by its influence on the development of the art of weaving, pottery, writing, painting and music that Buddhism had the most permanent effect on Japanese civilization at this period. A similar influence is noticeable in regard to architecture, not only among the nobles, as already mentioned, but also among all classes, the native hut of mud and wattles gives way to a more comfortable structure of timber, with matted floors. The aborigines, however, continued to live in pit or cave dwellings.

This period also witnessed a conspicuous development in the fashion and quality of dress. But while the official class was enabled to imitate the silken costumes of China, the ordinary folk could not rise above garments of straw, bark and skins, though there is mention of hempen garments for the people, tintured with shades extracted from plants. The *elite* preferred pure white silk to black, red or blue. Subsequently white became the

colour for mourning, possibly because it was originally the colour of the most respectable class. In time colours of various shades were used to denote distinctions of rank and class. By dress the sexes were not distinguished, save in the fashion of wearing the hair. Only men had headwear, and caps were used to denote rank. Men wore their hair in double topknots, boys in single topknots, and women let their beautiful tresses hang down their backs. Coats, shirts, trousers, girdles and hats are mentioned, as well as jewels of agate, crystal and jade.

Travelling was mainly on foot for common people, but officials were provided with horses or palanquins after the Chinese manner. When an emperor was seen riding in a two-wheeled Chinese vehicle, it was considered the acme of national progress. Most of the river traffic was in dug outs made from the trunks of trees, but navigation to the continent, which was frequent, must have necessitated more seaworthy craft. The mention of em-

hassies that never returned from China may mean that native ships were not always equal to so great a sea voyage, though it may imply that the envoys were belehded and their equipment confiscated. Commerce promoted the use of weights and measures, and the use of money as a medium of exchange. But trade was mostly by barter, and taxes were usually paid in kind. Clan wars greatly restricted interprovincial commerce, and piracy menaced international trade. Of geography there prevailed but the vaguest ideas. There appears to have existed not the faintest idea of the relation of the stars, sun, moon and earth, nor is there evidence even of any curiosity. The sun was, as it still is, worshipped as deity. The sun goddess remains one of the principal national deities.

Increasing mention of the importance of law is further evidence of Chinese influence. Regard for law is, however, more nominal than real. The connection between jurisprudence and civilization is always intimate

## 94 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

Law is based on custom, and custom is very conservative. In all nations there are more new laws than new customs or new morals, because civilization insists on development or decay. Conceptions of right change slowly, but ways of giving expression to right and justice change more rapidly or more often. And so in this era we have mention of *Daikwa* and *Daiho* codes of law, but how far they express only the arbitrary will of clan chiefs, or the ideas of the age that produced them, it is not easy to determine. As a rule, law begins not with individual, but with group rights and group status, in this case probably the ideas of the clan, for law should be the result of a common conviction existing before any act of legislation. We know that the formation and perpetuation of custom on which law depends, are due to the psychological force of imitation, which again is the great building force in society. To imitate the successful is essential to all who desire success. In primitive society the warrior

is the type of real success. In Yamato his departed spirit was, and is, worshipped as deity. The imitative instinct thus affects all life—religion, fashion, trade and civilization. It is probable that the earliest legal codes embodied only what clan leaders desired their supporters to imitate, failing which there was a penalty.

Imitation of worthy ethical customs is found less arresting or crippling to national development than imitation of merely material things. Over-dependence on Chinese initiative retarded the development of Yamato civilization. This is true even in law, for Chinese codes were so diverse from native ideas that they could only be imposed by main force. The new must have some relation to the old, if the change is to be effective for good. The present has its roots in the past. Creation is, of course, never absolute, for every new idea emerges out of an old one, which is fortunate, since it tends to prevent revolution, or the rule of minorities. Yamato could not thus

have reasoned; the rule of minorities was absolute. The imposition of new and alien legal codes was more easily effected than would have been possible in an older and more highly developed civilization. What this early civilization most lacked was freedom, especially for discussion. It long remained too pagan to welcome prophets. Yet it did give ear to Buddhist priests in a most remarkable way, because the appeal was less to spiritual than to material instincts. To the new religion must be ascribed the new law codes. That the new codes tended to increase the importance of clan leadership, as against the imperial Court, explains the facility of their acceptance.

The stage of development which Japanese civilization had reached at this period must be estimated by the degree in which justice was realized. Only in a just society does benevolence become a virtue and sensuality a crime. In Japan, as elsewhere, the earliest form of justice was based on the principle of retaliation. Justice meant taking revenge,

and usually giving more than one got. Payment of compensation was allowed in time, or at times, to avoid the beginning of endless blood feuds. Offences against the government were regarded as insults to the gods, and criminals were often offered as sacrifices to angry deities. All members of a family were held equally guilty with the offender. The principle of collective responsibility and guilt has taken long to disappear even from Christendom, if it has, in fact, yet fully done so. It is only with the rise of courts of justice that impartial treatment appears. But in a civilization where might still prevailed over right, the independence of the judiciary could not be relied upon. In early Japan a judicial trial was regarded as a contest between two parties, as in war, the stronger determining the verdict. It was not until later times that the main purpose of the court was to get at the real truth of the case and decide it on a basis of right. In pagan society veracity is believed impossible without ordeal or torture. And the progress of any civilization may be

estimated by the value it sets on truth. Neither religion nor custom was of much assistance to Japanese law in this way. The hideous details of early Japanese court trials are as unpleasant as they are unprofitable to explore. Torture was employed not to extract the truth, but to force the weaker to agree with the stronger. Nor did the cruelty of the courts seem to reduce the number of their victims. There was everywhere that primitive love of crime without which no literary tragedy would be possible. But in the Japan of this time crime always meant the offence of the lower against the higher, of earth against heaven. The upper class represented heaven and the lower class, earth.

Penalties too were naturally barbarous: extraction of nails or hair, burying or roasting alive, mutilating or branding, tattooing on forehead or cheek, and for high class misdemeanants banishment, confiscation of property, and slavery. Death at the stake was common down to the eighteenth century. Fines were inflicted when money was of more value



than the extinction of the offender. The only advance noticeable for centuries is a growing distinction between degrees of criminality, and a consequent tendency to modify the severity of penalty. But fines were only too often a form of bribery, defeating the ends of justice. At the same time it has to be admitted that in this early Yamato civilization one does not so often find justice degraded by mercilessness as an ideal to the extent that one does in early Egyptian society, where the human heart appears to have been as hard as the pyramids. By the sixth century Buddhism had not only improved the laws, but had also somewhat moderated their penalties. Cruelty seems to be one of the most difficult vices for even religion to eradicate, nor was Japan worse in this respect than contemporary Europe. The Chinese custom of bringing back human noses, instead of heads, of war prisoners, prevailed in Japan down to the sixteenth century. There was a very general fearlessness of death, always peculiar to a society not long emerged from barbarism.

As yet murder was no more a crime than it was in Homer's day; society appears to have reached about the Homeric stage of development. Nor was it wholly without its romantic aspects. On one occasion when an emperor had taken a fancy to a pretty maiden and summoned her to his presence, his son saw her and fell equally under her charms. Whereupon the imperial father gallantly handed her over to the young prince's possession, father and son exchanging poems over the auspicious event.

Repulsive to us as were many of the aspects of this civilization, we must not suppose that it was altogether without some of the virtues and graces that indicate a considerable degree of development. There were saints like Prince Shotoku, who refused to engage in war with the arrogant chief of the Soga clan, and—through the head of the Shotoku family, Prince Yamashiro—replied as follows to the warrior's challenge: "I do not wish after generations to say that anyone on my account mourned a father or a mother. Is the con-

queror in battle the only hero?" Then he withdrew with his family of twenty three to the ancestral shrine, where all committed suicide. But the sacrifice had no effect on the Soga family, whose head did not scruple to assassinate even an emperor, but this treachery was in turn betrayed by the Kama-tari family, later the Fujiwara, which devised means to exterminate the Soga clan and dominate Japan for centuries. Bushido was not yet born.

The *Daikoku*, which was the first code of Japanese law to appear in writing was an ethical rather than a strictly legal code, but it aimed to restore the imperial authority that had so long been defied by the clan chiefs, especially the chiefs who had become land grabbers, exploiting their weaker neighbours. Militant chiefs were to be disarmed, new governors of provinces were to be appointed, and the strong no longer permitted to increase their estates at the expense of the weak. Taxes were substituted for forced labour. This was a very important reform in a country

where the progress of civilization so much depended on exploitation of land. The code was based on the land policy of China. As will be seen later, the code did not bring about the reforms indicated. But from the time of the appearance of the new code in A D 645 the Sinoization of Japan became still further emphasized. Chinese titles of rank and office were now formally introduced, more scholars from China brought in to effect reforms, and the Buddhist religion was placed in the ascendant, the emperor himself becoming a devoted advocate of the foreign religion. The *Dai-wo* reforms were expected to bring the common people within the pale of justice, and be relieved from the cruel oppression of centuries. Even a petition box was set up at the gate of the imperial palace, into which complaints could be dropped and receive imperial attention. At the death of an emperor all slaves on imperial estates were to be freed. Landlords were prohibited from getting smallholders into their debt and then

seizing the lands and forcing the occupiers to become their slaves. In dress slaves wore black, and freemen yellow. As has been suggested, the code failed to work, because under the influence of Chinese Buddhism it struck a blow at the nobility and ultimately at the throne itself. The Chinese theory of personal merit taking precedence to hereditary rank in government was dangerous to a system based on the divine descent of the ruler. The result was that great families resented the interference of the new code with their wild liberties, and began to usurp imperial power more than before, while the masses of the people remained as much under oppression as ever. Thus Japan found herself in the coils of a more formidable bureaucracy than was possible under the old laws, while suffering from all the official ranks, grades and red tape of China as well.

The failure of the *Daiikwa* code is clearly implied by the necessity of introducing another ready made code from China half a

century later. In A.D. 697 the emperor Momu instituted the *Daiho* code; but he allowed his régime to come so hopelessly under domination of the Fujiwara family that the code was ineffective. This was the beginning of a family interference with imperial government that remained an imposition for centuries. The Fujiwara insisted on the imperial consorts being selected from that family, so that they could always be sure of having relatives at the imperial Court to control affairs in the family interest. The new code was promoted by Fujiwara influence, because it established definitely the principle of Confucianism that the people at large, without regard to rank or pedigree, owed equal duty to the State; that only those having special claims on public benevolence were entitled to fixed exemptions, and that capacity and attainments were the only real qualification for office, and not noble birth, as heretofore. The provision of the new law that tax should be paid in cloth, silk, indigo or copper caused these industries

to experience unprecedented development. All forced labour could now be commuted to payment in kind. But mechanical regimentation of the whole nation was such as to arrest moral development. Instead of position depending on merit, as the new law suggested, it ceased to depend on rank only that it might all the more depend on force. If law is to be based on force rather than on right and justice, a civil is to be preferred to a military force. Thus the spirit of the new law was ignored. Succession to the throne was now for the first time based on primogeniture, for, with the Fujiwara family in the ascendant, it did not matter who the ruler was, nor what his merit, the less significant he proved, the better he suited the dominant family. Consequently the divine ruler was obliged thenceforth to live more and more in a divine way, as unobtrusive and secluded as the ancestral gods, and as little given to open interference in affairs of State.

## CHAPTER VI

### NARA CIVILIZATION

(A D 700—800)

THE Nara period, though lasting a little less than a century, has yet left its mark on Japanese civilization for all time. Society had by this time fully emerged from barbarism, and progress was evident in every direction. Hitherto each new reign had involved a change of capital, but increasing enlightenment under Buddhist influence lessened fear of contumination from death, and the site of the next capital became permanent for almost a century. Consciousness of permanency lent impetus to more stable government, no less than to progress in art, architecture, education, religion and literature, to say nothing of social life. The *Daikoku* and *Daiho* reforms, described in the preceding



chapter, though tending to lessen imperial prestige somewhat, nevertheless promised greater centralization of authority, since the imperial Court, with the aid of the Fujiwara family, gained greater ascendancy for a time over the provincial magnates and hereditary chieftains. Schools for the study of history, law, medicine and Chinese classics and æsthetics were established, and examples of the results of this new culture have come down to us to reveal the remarkable degree of achievement then attained. The elaborate artistry of Buddhist architecture continued to exercise an increasing effect on domestic construction. The lovely gardens of the temple groves were imitated with still greater elaboration in the gardens surrounding the mansions of the rich. In 732 a great bell was cast for the Todaiji at Nara, which was 13 feet in height and 49 tons in weight. The Nara Daibutsu, cast in the year 747, remains the largest bronze statue in the world. It contains 968 000 lbs. of copper, 870 lbs. of gold, 16,827 lbs. of tin,

## 108 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

1954 lbs of mercury, besides lead and silver, and stands 53 feet in height, and is said to weigh 460 tons

Buddhism had by this time gained such complete ascendancy over the nation that the Treasury was impoverished by concentrating on the erection of great temples and their support, which consumed much valuable metal and human labour. With this steady increase in the number of temples and their elaborate ceremonial, appears to have gone on a simultaneous increase in questionable pleasures of all sorts, until a marked degree of effeminacy betrayed a menacing moral laxity. It was the golden age of Japanese poetry, literature and art. Never since has the native muse revealed such delicacy of sentiment, been so refined in language, or displayed such exquisite skill in phrasing and composition.

In all these indications of advancement the influence of Korea and China was as distinctly seen as in the previous age. A census of the

time shows that out of 1177 noble families, 381 were of Korean or Chinese descent, whence may be inferred the nature and extent of immigration. Chinese scholars, artists, artisans, physicians and priests poured into the country, and their influence was uninterrupted for centuries. In glyptic, structural and decorative art they were supreme. Under such tutelage, it was only after prolonged effort that the nation began to acquire that self-consciousness essential to a greater mastery over its own mind, enabling it to adapt rather than merely imitate the originals, and so permit adaptations to merge into real creations. The beautiful Horyuji temple, still standing at Nara, is a monument to the nobility of this art. And yet here, no more than in ancient Greece, was art able to overcome the detrimental effect of luxury, sensuality and epicurism on the moral fibre of the nation.

By this time the older forms of Buddhism were breaking up into sectarianism. Men like

## 110 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

Doki, Gembo and Kanshin introduced the sects that had appeared in China, and the envious rivalry of these for Court favour tended to the corruption of religion and life. Nara became the ecclesiastical centre of the empire, where magnificent temples, wealthy monasteries and a haughty hierarchy dominated the public mind. There must have been priests as high minded as Gembo, and Confucianists as noble as Makibi, who had the courage to oppose corruption in public life, but they were promptly suppressed by the Buddhist hierarchy, with the sympathy of the Fujiwara interests. It is indeed remarkable how rapidly, by a system of compromise with Shinto, the new religion was able to gain control of Japanese civilization in something less than 200 years. Buddhist missions and monasteries were to be seen in almost all the provinces of the empire. The imperial family and the great houses early saw that in the foreign faith might be found a powerful agency for the control of the masses in the

public interest. The syncretism of Buddhism and Shinto, whereby the gods of the latter became the avatars of the former, was a complete success. The Shinto hell of this life Buddhism extended into the life beyond, so that man was threatened from the past, the present and the future, and could escape only by the media and mediation of the priests. Yet in the shadow of the giant gilded idols and the gorgeous temples and altars, vice lurked and flourished none the less, nor were the weak less under oppression from the strong. It was a civilization most pagan in its irresponsibility towards the people.

During the Nara period the Fujiwara family gained a dominant position over its Soga rivals in State councils. Not being of imperial descent themselves, they were unable to make their daughters empresses, even after placing them in the imperial Court. But the defect was very cleverly obviated in time. By taking their own wives from the Minamoto family, which was of imperial stock and then

having the daughters of these wives consort with emperors who were themselves sons of Fujiwara women, the Fujiwara established the principle that two half-breeds make one whole breed, the non imperial or lower halves becoming dormant for practical purposes. The first lady of Fujiwara descent to be acknowledged as empress was Asoka, consort of the emperor Kemyo, 735. From this time all the imperial consorts continued to be selected from this famous family down to the present day, the last one, however, being the empress-dowager of the late Emperor Yoshihito. The consort of the emperor Hirohito was not of Fujiwara blood, which marks a radical change in Japanese custom. But by this device the Fujiwara in the eighth and ninth centuries acquired complete mastery of imperial affairs, and ruled in the name of the sovereign.

How the Fujiwara were able to utilize religion to the advantage of their family policy is one of the most instructive aspects

of the civilization. To suit the convenience of their Fujiwara supporters, the Buddhist hierarchy introduced the system of *insei*, or retirement, by which emperors who proved too independent could be induced to retire to monastic life with the title of *Hō-o*. To aspire to this honour was advanced as the highest imperial ideal. Being themselves divine, the emperors could spend their last days in the presence of the deities, who could not decline to be thus influenced on the nation's behalf by their imperial relatives. Some rulers, it is true, were only too willing to shirk the responsibilities of the throne and the unpleasantness of perpetual interference from the Fujiwara by retiring to monastic life, where they were left unmolested in the pursuit of every pleasure. It was always an immense advantage to any monastery to have an emperor on its list of monks though he usually lived quite separately. But this habit of retirement afforded only a further opportunity to unscrupulous leaders for usurpation of

imperial authority, a danger to which the nation was exposed up to the tenth century. As some emperors proved unwilling to be manipulated in this way, and refused to be forced into retirement, the device did not always work smoothly, so the Fujiwara attempted to obviate the difficulty by establishing the precedent of placing children on the throne, whom they could dominate until of age, and then retire them if they proved obdurate. That Buddhism should have approved this scheme for the sake of worldly advantage shows that, as a religion, it was unable to escape the paganism it had come to convert. At first a sincere approach to the Unseen, soon the religion, in Japan, descended to the native polytheism, and was content to become a mere devil dodging superstition, supplying, not rules of life and conduct, but insurance against ill fortune and the tortures of hell. The resemblance of some of the nobler Buddhist sects to Christianity, especially in their use of incarnations, may

.



have been due to the influence of Nestorianism which reached China in the seventh century Nor is it without significance that it was through women, whom the religion in doctrine despised, that Buddhism exercised its greatest control over the imperial Court, and often over politics and government generally

It is almost an axiom of history that when ecclesiastical hierarchy becomes wealthy, and mechanical supplant spiritual views of religion, authority supports itself by superstition and cruel persecution Under Nara civilization every family was ordered to provide itself with a Buddhist shrine, with its sacred image and regular worship, on pain of having all the machinery of an inquisition set going against the offender The most incredible superstitions were fostered, and seemed readily to find favour with the multitude The spirits of the earth, air and sky were made real to the cringing population Witches, wizards and sorcerers did a thriving trade The imperial Court was obliged to keep over one

hundred priests in constant attendance to exorcise evil spirits. If a member of the imperial household gave way to excess and suffered nightmare in consequence, an evil spirit had seized him and had to be driven out by priests, of whom alone such spirits were afraid. This system obtained in the Hermit Kingdom of Korea down to the time of its annexation by Japan.

Nor is it much palliation of the circumstances to admit that in this respect civilization in contemporary Europe was scarcely superior. It is the divorce between morality and religion that is so impressive in this Buddhist civilization. Even an empress disgraced herself in this period by establishing a *liaison* with a priest, and had the emperor killed in order to maintain the position of her paramour. Her priestly lover practically assumed control of the government, but, as she was a Fujiwara lady, nothing could be done. Under Buddhism, too, there was a wide diffusion of concubinage, the only limit

being wealth and desire By plunder of the farmers and by conquest of the aborigines the great landowners still continued to enlarge their estates and to reduce the imperial revenue, as indicated in a previous chapter The provincial officials and lords lived in opulence, while the Court and government were often inactive merely through poverty. Many of the farmers were forced to sell themselves into bondage, or die for want of sustenance Rural life became so unsafe that clans and minor lords had to organize in self-defence to protect their estates from pillage, and the private police thus created from the *tomōbe* class developed into the *samurai*, through whom the feudal lords dominated the whole country later The situation was chaotic, the principle of heredity was discredited, but nothing could be done to improve the situation, because the Fujiwara had all appointments in their own hands

By these defects of civilization conditions were created that resulted in centuries of civil

war later. The imperial progeny continued to be so prodigious that the difficulty of their disposal always menaced the stability of government. Usually, however, they passed into one or the other of the two great clans that were of imperial descent, the Taira and the Minamoto, who were always in danger of becoming rivals inimical to peace. The tension they constantly created and maintained developed into many years of civil strife in the following period. Not all the rulers were so spineless as to submit without question to Fujiwara arrogance. The emperor Konin in 774 was so incensed with the scandalous behaviour of certain lords, that he had them executed, and this pleased the nation so much that the emperor's birthday was celebrated as a national festival, giving rise to a custom that has prevailed ever since, the festival known as *tenchōsetsu*, in honour of the imperial birthday.

Another anomalous aspect of the Nara period was the continued difficulty of being

able to bring the aborigines under effective control of the central government. The disposition of central authority to leave the task of subduing the aborigines to provincial lords only discredited still further the imperial authority, while it tempted the provincial lords to become mere exploiters of the natives. In this task religion appears to have played no important part. The temples profited by exploiting the land as much as did the clan chiefs, the temple lands were exempt from taxation. Nearly one half of the national revenue was expended on temples and their ceremonial, consuming so much copper that the country was depleted of currency. On the other hand, Buddhism continued to contribute the main impulse to industry, especially in architecture, pottery and glyptic art. Education was only at the capital, and was for the official class. Culture, so far as it was real, pertained only to rank and wealth.

With the progress of conquest over the aborigines and the increasing extent of land

reclaimed, roads began to be opened up in various directions through the main islands, such as the great *Nakasendo* running northward from the capital. Chinese carts, at first used only by the imperial house, now became available to all who could afford such equipage. Agriculture was also much extended, cereals from China were more widely grown and better crops of barley, millet and beans added to the nation's food supplies. Rewards offered for increase of cultivated land indicate a national solicitude in this respect. Owing to lack of foresight, and of facilities for transportation, famine at times decimated the population. A system of markets, after the manner of China, was established in the capital. Coinage, which had been used in China since the fourth century B.C., did not find currency in Japan until the Nara period, probably because precious metals were scarce. The consumption of so much metal in temple bells and other sacred utensils made the supply still

more limited. Bronze coins seem to have been the earliest media of exchange, in place of rice or fabrics. The coins were round, with a square hole, for carrying them on a string. The use of metal money, however, was long confined to the upper classes and came into use among ordinary folk in travelling, as it was more convenient to carry than food. Mining first began in this period.

The most vivid picture of civilization in the Nara period is found in contemporary literature, the existence of which is in itself ample proof of a long previous development of thought and action. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, compilations of the Nara period, have already been mentioned as affording some account of prehistoric Japan. They are however, more reliable authorities in dealing with the period of their compilation, for then they are describing contemporary life. There is also the *Manyōshū* anthology of 300 poems to throw further light on the period and the centuries prior to it. This

literature indicates that Chinese Buddhism had induced the Japanese mind to think and reason, and to assume, in some slight measure, a philosophical attitude toward existence. But, on the whole, it is a literature neither philosophical, didactic nor political, but rather dreamy and introspective, concerned with abstract and impractical things, like Asiatic literature generally. The prose is too ill formed and dependent on Chinese models to show literary merit. The poetry is better, but primarily an expression of emotion, yet too mildly personal to sound a profound lyric note. Concerned mainly with love intrigues and domestic life, with loneliness and the elegiac motive, lamenting the uncertainty of life's tenure, this early verse betrays the pessimism of the religion that inspired it. It does not fail, however, to be true to the Yamato spirit, which is devoted to the beauty and inspiration of external nature. There are pleasing examples of intimate acquaintance with the varying aspects of the seasons, the



music of running water, snow on the mountain heights, the drifting seaweed, the song of birds, the hum of insects the croaking of frogs, the plaintive cry of the deer in autumn, the red tints of autumn maples and the moon light and flower scenery of the country. An amiable feature of this first literature of Japan is the absence of war epics and war pictures of any sort, due surely to no want of subject. There is a notable lack of imaginative power, and no impersonation of abstract virtues or qualities, in fact, none of the muses and graces of European poetry.

In its passive attitude to life the Nara civilization was truly oriental. Things were not done they just happened, and if one did not like them, *shi ka'a ga nai*, they could not be helped. This attitude was doubtless due to Buddhism, for the earlier Yamato mind, like its gods was active rather than acquiescent. Gods and men alike could do things in early Yamato. The creation of Yamato and its people was a big thing in

itself, but it was done. The new religion seems to have arrested this disposition, and superimposed a spirit of letting things take their course. *Kharma* was inevitable. Which usually meant letting Buddhism and the Fujiwara family have their way. It must be admitted, however, that the literature of the Nara period indicates quite as advanced a conception of civilization as that which prevailed in contemporary Europe. What had England, or any of the modern nations, in the way of literature at the end of the eighth century? On the other hand, there is a striking contrast with Greece and Rome in the realm of intellectual achievement, especially in literature and philosophy. Nara literature reveals a state of society not unlike that of Britain in the age of "Piers Plowman", and some of the Manyōshū poems describe the poverty of the peasantry in a similar manner.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HEIAN ERA

(A D 800—1200)

THE highly developed centre of civilization that arose within a century around the imperial capital at Nara was destined to face disturbance by the determination of the new emperor Kwamu in 794 to remove the seat of government to another site, this time on the river Kamo. More carefully educated than most of his predecessors, this ruler saw no hope of that independence essential to progressive government until he could escape from the machinations of the Buddhist hierarchy at Nara. And the significant name that he gave to his new capital was Heianjo, the city of peace. But peace he did not find there, for the priests at once decided to follow him, and soon made the new capital

as much the centre of their meddlesome operations as the old capital had been. Keeping pace with the construction of the city, the Buddhist hierarchy secured all the more favourable sites, and soon covered them with temples and monasteries. Yet the Heian era is, in almost every respect, one of the most important in the history of Japanese civilization. During this period the various formative influences that went to the making of Japan concentrated in one permanent direction, and the nation took its stride.

The new seat of government, which, in the absence of peace, had changed its name to Kyoto, or western capital, in contrast to the eastern, or old capital, at Nara, was the first and only Japanese city to be built to order. It was carefully laid out and constructed in Chinese fashion, intended to be a model of the contemporary Chinese capital, and in eleven years it was ready for occupation. Neither time nor expense was spared to make it one of the most beautiful of cities, as well as

the centre of art, learning and efficient government. Day by day, year by year, the walls and principal buildings of the metropolis arose, until the city was more than three miles square, crossed at right angles by nine principal thoroughfares. The imperial palace precincts alone were nearly 5000 by 4000 feet, and the edifice itself was tiled in green porcelain. Most of the work of transporting the enormous mass of material, and erecting the buildings and moat walls, was done by forced labour, and yet the great expense of the undertaking impoverished the nation. The eye may still gaze on the remains of the massive stone moat walls, which, like the Pyramids of Egypt, stand as mute symbols of the unrequited toil of myriad hands.

On Mount Hieiyei, an imposing natural eminence overlooking the city, a great Buddhist monastery arose from the north east, whose altars were to ward off the demons that always approached from that direction. History testifies to the arrival of a time when this

establishment was regarded by the government as itself a repository of demons, that had to be rooted out and exterminated by force. But in the early years of Kyoto history, Buddhism, by the magnificence of its temple architecture and the splendour of its ceremonial, added to the glory of the new capital. Meanwhile it was no less a centre of worldly ambition, and otherwise questionable ethics, than it had been at Nara. It was now the established religion of the State, and, by promoting all forms of superstition, held the masses in the grip of its creed. The religious establishment owned large territories that commanded enormous revenues. Its lands and buildings exempt from taxation, the temples often added still further to their income by allowing those who desired to evade taxation to register their property in the name of a temple, and if the bribes thus collected were not renewed at the proper time, the temple confiscated the estate and thus extended its lands. In consideration of pay-

ment for masses, the priests claimed the power to prolong human life, to shorten life if their demands were not recognized and to hasten the progress of the departed through purgatory, large sums being collected by this form of religious insurance. The Buddhist priesthood to the commoner became the best stepping stone to preferment in the State. The priests and monks had the reputation of being the only scholars, teachers and travellers. In 836 Prince Shinnyo set out for India to study the religion at its source, and was eaten by a tiger in Siam. Famous monks like Dengyo Daishi and Kukai brought back from China the more philosophic doctrines of Buddhism, and founded the Tendai and the Shingon sects, the one based on a system that fitted the disciplinary and meditative methods of China to the pre-existing tenets of earlier sects in Japan, while the Shingon doctrine of the True Word was practically identical with early Christian gnosticism. It is remarkable that at this time Shinto produced no

able representatives either in sainthood or scholarship, while the cloisters abounded in more men of ability and ambition than even the Court circles, and thither the government turned for its most efficient agents. Supposed to stand for the doctrine of mercy and kindness to all living things, this religion yet did little to ameliorate the sordid condition of the masses, or to interest the higher classes in their welfare. It was obvious that while art might be the handmaid of religion, it could never take the place of religion. In after years, when Heian society began to feel the menace of disintegration, with which paganism was already threatening China, imitation of that country fell into desuetude, and Buddhism, feeling its position thus endangered, attempted to retain control of public affairs by forming into a powerful military institution that had to be disarmed by force.

All through the Heian era religion became an instrument in the policy of the nobles to control the masses in the interests of their



superiors The hierarchy was patient of the most unprincipled policy so long as it promoted ecclesiastical designs It is remarkable how closely some of these methods approached the schemes of the Papacy of the same period Low standards among the clergy implied still lower standards among the people Religion traded shamelessly on the ignorant incredulity of the masses The universal fear of spirits was utilized to have grand shrines erected to the appeasement of those slain in battle, and so placate the wrath of the unseen forces Education continued to be for the official class only, its interests were intellectual and æsthetic, rather than ethical or moral It was thought best to keep the masses in ignorance, and thereby leave them more open to manipulation in official interest. There is a solitary example of one school at Kyoto where common folk were allowed to send their children, the school at the Toji temple

Through the ninth century Buddhist and Fujiwara influence conspired to reduce the

throne to a subordinate position, and so place the administration still more fully in the hands of that great family. Emperors were created and deposed at will, through the system of *insei*. In 887 the emperor Uda was induced to create a new office calculated to exercise a lasting influence on Japanese civilization, that of *kanpaku*, a sort of prime minister whose position gave the Fujiwara appointee a place of almost supreme power in the State. To allay criticism and stifle unwelcome interest in national affairs, the imperial Court, and those likely to question Fujiwara policy, were kept under the influence of a constant round of alluring pleasure, the nature of which was calculated to create an incapacity for interference. The ruler and his officials were induced to spend their days in luxurious ease under flowering trees, engaged in poetry competitions, but mostly in less intelligent pastimes, and their nights in more sensual diversions. Behind the scenes, however, both in Court and government, there was

a world of dark intrigue and jealousy, with quarrels frequent and often furious. Even intellectual luminaries like Sugawara Michizane, Miyoshi, and Tachibana Hiromi, indulged in mutual rancour without recognition of mutual high position and unusual talent, and had pupils not slow to emulate such brilliant examples. Sugawara has the credit of being one of the very few who dared to challenge the Fujiwara usurpation, but he only suffered banishment for his pains and his patriotism. None the less, it says something for the spirit of the nation that the shrine of Sugawara Michizane still has its thousands of pilgrims who worship the spirit of so gallant a patriot.

In the first decade of the tenth century arose another patriot, in the person of Miyoshi Kiyotsura, who ventured to present a petition to the throne protesting against the evils of the time, among which he mentions "vicious and ferocious" priests, many of whom, he alleges, had sought this office merely to escape taxation or forced labour, and had proved

guilty of robbery and other crimes. The petitioner prays that the evil priests be unfrocked, and that the police who plundered the people should be also punished. But in regard to the prostitution of religion and official position to evil ends the authorities appear to have been either unwilling or unable to enforce reform. Some insight into the state of society in the tenth century may be gained further from a petition sent in by Ono Yoshifuru in 946: "My information is that those who pursue irregular courses are not necessarily sons of provincial governors alone. Many others make lawless use of power and authority, for confederacies, engage daily in military exercises, collect and maintain men and horses under pretext of hunting game, menace the district governors, plunder the common people, violate their wives and daughters, steal their beasts of burden and employ them for their own purposes, thus interrupting the course of agriculture."

The persistent inability of the central

authorities to control the provinces, and prevent anarchy and plunder, led to the rise of two classes of nobles—the ineffective yet cultured Court nobles (*kugé*) who were confined to the capital, and the more active and capable military nobles (*buhé*) who lived in the provinces, where they cultivated their estates and kept up forces of their own to protect them. While the Court nobles were spending their time in idle pleasures at the capital, the provincial nobles were acquiring soldierly habits, and armed bands, whence emerged the *samurai* spirit that subsequently raised in revolt, overthrew the Fujiwara domination and instituted feudalism. At the end of the tenth century the lawless spirit was such that armed bandits could raid the capital and loot the imperial palace. It will be seen later that among the leaders who arrayed themselves against Fujiwara egotism and incompetency were the heads of the Taira and the Minamoto clans, and, owing to jealousy between these clans, all the lesser clans were

forced sooner or later to choose one or the other of them as leaders. Co operation in defeat of the Fujiwara enabled the Taira and the Minamoto for a time to sink their differences and pool their ambitions and rivalries, but, after the overthrow of the enemy, the rivalries of the two clans were renewed, plunging the nation into years of civil strife.

The increasing power of the landed gentry was one of the most outstanding features of eleventh-century civilization in Japan. And this enormous development of wealth and power was invariably at the expense of the central government. The provincial nobles continued to add steadily to their estates by enslaving debtors and taking their lands, as well as by reclaiming land from the aborigines. On land thus acquired from the aborigines, known as *shoen*, or manors, there was no tax. Other untaxed lands were those granted to distinguished officials in recognition of national services, such lands were known as *shiden* manors. These, together with the temple

lands, known as *shiden*, in time came to represent a vast area of untaxed territory, which could be rented to tenants for much less than was charged for imperial lands. The result was a general drift from the imperial to the provincial estates, with consequent impoverishment of the imperial treasury and a corresponding increase of provincial wealth. Puissant families like the Taira and the Fujiwara came to own whole provinces and controlled the provincial governors. By the end of the eleventh century the Minamoto family owned fifteen provinces, and after their defeat of the Taira clan in the twelfth century their wealth was vastly increased by the destruction of that clan and the confiscation of its estates. Then the Minamoto owned more than half of the whole empire and had little difficulty in controlling the country in their own interests. Great nobles who owned so much land were known as *daimyo*. It was the custom of provincial nobles to send their sons to be educated at the capital,

where they joined the Imperial Guards to learn Court manners and get into touch with the Taira and Minamoto leaders

The Masakado revolt in 930 showed how far the landed gentry were getting out of hand, and how little the central government could do to quell disorder. In 1019 Japan was invaded by a Siberian tribe, called the *Tou*, who came in fifty boats which were from 40 to 60 feet in length, and harassed the coast for sixteen days, killing and plundering the inhabitants, until they were finally driven off, not by the imperial authorities, but by the provincial nobles. When such happenings were treated as private episodes, the weakness and incompetency of the Fujiwara administration were apparent to all. The country was, in fact, travelling fast towards the decentralization of government that came later. The provinces realized that no help could be expected from the capital in case of emergency. A rapid change came in 1028, when one of the Taira leaders began to plunder a neighbour,



and the imperial government, being helpless, asked the Minamoto to check this conduct. Thus commenced a feud, which, though intermittent for a time, ultimately placed the Minamoto in control of Japan. We have seen how this constant incidence of civil strife produced a body of men known as *samurai*, trained and disciplined by their provincial lords to the highest point of excellence, vigour and loyalty. For these, Court proficiency in *etiquette*, culture and the art of casuistry was no match. In that age ability to make and prosecute war was the test of fitness for office. The Court nobles and the central government cultivated a society in which it was a greater sin to be vulgar than to be vile. Persons of the highest position could be notoriously loose morally with impunity. No excess was improper so long as the prescribed *etiquette* was followed. Sin was not sin if sinlessly done. All this licence was soon to be put to the acid test of war.

It was in literature, and in art generally,

that the Heian era reached its highest triumphs. Almost every form of amusement assumed an æsthetic significance. Graceful compositions in verse and prose developed much skill in expressing indirect and impersonal ideas in the most elegant phraseology. From the *Makura-no-soshi*, a brilliant sketch of that time, we learn that the emperors themselves were accustomed to hold verse tournaments in beautifully decorated halls hung with spring blossoms, where the greatest poets of the day were ranged opposite equally distinguished poetesses to vie with each other in producing examples of their art. Another game was to guess the brand of incense from the fragrance, and even to name the various ingredients in various brands of incense. Among the gayest of spring festivals was *hanami*, or flower-viewing, when society went down the river in pleasure boats to see the cherry-trees in bloom. Moonlight picnics among gay lords and ladies for such purposes were very popular. The excess of elaboration and

expense in games, and amusements of the most extravagant nature, was not unlike that known in Rome in the days of the decadence. And for the same reason it was an attempt to evade the sordid realism of society by indulging in dreams of idealism. Fads and fancies and crazes of all kinds were rife. Pet cats and dogs were accorded official titles and imperial decorations, and such favourites were at death interred with State ceremony. Kittens born to noble mothers at the palace received the same care as imperial infants, the feline mother was given ceremonial presents after the manner of an empress, and a lady in waiting was appointed to look after the new litter. We must not suppose these hobbies to indicate any particular feeling of humanity for animals, for the emperor Yozei liked feeding toads to snakes, and to witness bloody contests between dogs and monkeys, as well as to send men up trees to be hunted with arrows, like apes.

If art be the avoidance of excess, then

## 142 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

Japanese art at this time was below the ideal of the Greeks. It is possible to mistake a devotion to pleasure and indolence for devotion to art. That such interest tends to the development of art is also possible. In the Heian era, music, dancing and painting were promoted to the utmost. Both dancing and music were adapted from Chinese modes. Native costume among the rich developed a beauty not found in former models from China, Court ladies wearing lengthy trains, and jewelled headgear that well set off their matchless black tresses. For both men and women dress fashions were more voluminous than in China. Women shaved off their eyebrows and painted others higher up on the forehead; and they also painted their faces, as Japanese women continue to do. As has been already suggested, the great improvement witnessed in making fine fabrics of silk owed its inspiration to the Buddhist love of gorgeous brocades for temple vestments. The same influence maintained an increasing

interest in the development of fine pieces in brass and porcelain. But this art was in every way more sensuously human than exquisitely divine. Yet it had the advantage of being very largely a reflection of the Chinese devotion to nature. The paintings of Kanaoka and Nobuzane reveal a genuine feeling for nature, as well as a joy in life that is not characteristic of distinctly Buddhist art. The temples lent great encouragement to painting and lacquer, and the wealthier nobles followed this example. In this period was created that matchless gold dust surface known as *nashiji*, and the wondrous inlaid mother of pearl. Sculpture, however, lacked the grandeur of conception seen in the Nara masters yet Jocho and Unkei did some brilliant work in wood sculpture. Armour making lent much impetus to art metal work while sword furniture became in itself a fine art.

Ambitious architecture was always under the menace of seismic attack, and consequently never experienced equal progress with other

arts But the absence of imposing structures was compensated for by wooded parks and flowering gardens, no less than by lining the streets with flowering trees In buildings, the main emphasis was laid on interior rather than on exterior decoration Absence of paint made the art of drawing out the beauty of the natural wood a permanent motive in Japanese interiors, as it continues to be, paint being used only for pictorial purposes on screens and sliding doors Some of the mural paintings of this period have never been surpassed These usually represent miniature landscapes, a feature also of Japanese gardens Between the mansions of the rich and the hovels of the poor there was a great gulf fixed, to which Chomei makes reference in his *Hojoki*, and his description of the famine experiences of 1181 shows the terrible effects of such a visitation in so improvident a civilization

It was in literature that the art of the Heian era reached its greatest development But the degree of perfection then attained was

not subsequently sustained, nor was the quality regained before the nineteenth century. It is, however, like the society that produced it, a literature effeminate, laughter loving and lotus eating, and in no way representative of Japanese society as a whole. In origin, theme and inspiration it is of the capital. Lacking in any positive masculine quality, much of this composition is descriptive of the pleasures of the time. A singular aspect of it is that woman attains greater prominence as an author than she has ever done in Japan since. One of the most noteworthy pieces of fiction in the history of Japanese literature appeared in this era, and was the work of a woman, the Lady Murasaki Shikibu, a maid of honour in the imperial Court at Kyoto. The *Genji Monogatari* is a production refined and delicate in language, brilliant in style, and marked by an absence of the morally objectionable that places it above some eighteenth century literature in Europe. The *Makura-no soshi* was another clever composition by a woman,

## 146 THE CIVILIZATION OF JAPAN

Seishonagon This period also produced one of the nation's greatest poets, Tsurayuki, author of the *Tosa Nih*, and editor of that wonderful anthology, the *Kokinshu*, with its 1400 examples of national verse. The amount of good poetry that appeared in this era almost ranks it with the Elizabethan age in this respect, and must be taken as indicating the degree of intellectual progress Japan had attained by this time. The national language, which had long been in subservience to Chinese idiom and convention, now revealed signs of having won the freedom and naturalness essential to a national literature. With its rich system of terminations and particles, the Japanese language became a pliant instrument in native hands, the vocabulary being varied and copious to a degree that is amazing, since it was drawn almost exclusively from native sources.

One reason why so much of the polite literature of the period was by women is that men were more concerned with history, law



or theology, and consequently wrote in what they regarded as the more masculine and scholarly literary language of China just as our own intellectuals of the same period wrote in Latin. The native language was not regarded as capable of literature. Japanese culture spoke in one tongue and wrote in another. The difference between the spoken and the written languages of Japan persists even to this day, though the influence of the press, and of public address, is to bring about a *greater fusion*. *That most of the poetry of the Heian era is in the native language*, whether written by men or women shows that the instinct to express the deepest feeling in the language of daily life was bound to triumph over the old literary conventions. But why art and literature should have reached so high a degree of perfection in the Heian era and then declined forms one of the most suggestive studies in Japanese civilization. Signs of decay were already apparent in the fact that it was a literature lacking the high

seriousness of great achievement. It savours of a society without sufficient moral stamina to endure. China had long been laughing at Japan for allowing women such prominence in society and literature, and the sneer seemed to affect woman's position in Japan, until she was dethroned, and has not since retrieved her position. And yet the woman writers of the Heian era could hardly have been less intellectual than their lordly superiors. But woman had gained that position before Confucianism and Buddhism had discredited her and deprived her of a soul, except on condition that she should happen to be reborn as a man. One of the greatest prophets of the thirteenth century won distinction by affirming that women had souls. The overwhelming disaster that befell Japanese literature after the Heian era was the civil war that devastated the country for centuries, driving literature into the monasteries, where, as in Europe, its theme was changed to brooding over the sorrow and misery of human life.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FEUDAL CIVILIZATION

(A D 1200—1600)

FEUDALISM began in Japan when the aborigines were employed as slaves or serfs on the lands taken from them by emperors and clan chieftains. At first merely slaves and later serfs, many of this class became *freemen serving their lords instead of paying rent*. The system had been in slow process for centuries before it became fully established in the likeness of European feudalism, though the two systems were never really identical, since the Japanese feudal lord held his lands in the name of the sovereign, whilst the European feudatory as a rule owned the land in his own right. For the most part, however, in Japan the distinction was merely nominal, because the average feudal lord controlled his

lands as if they were his own possessions. We have already seen that the rise of great military families, overshadowing the authority of the central government at Kyoto, was a striking feature of the latter portion of the Heian era. At last there were three great families—the Fujiwara, dominating the imperial Court and the central authorities, the Taira practically in command of the southern provinces, and the Minamoto, which controlled most of the northern portion of the empire. As the Taira and the Minamoto were both of imperial descent, they were intensely jealous rivals, and the Fujiwara managed to maintain some measure of independence by playing one clan off against the other, but the differences between the two clans in time grew so acute that all the lesser clan chiefs were obliged to range themselves under the banner of one or the other of those bidding for national leadership.

The Hogen tumult in 1155 led the Minamoto openly to challenge the authority of the

Taira, and the result was that one half of the empire found itself arrayed against the other, with the break-up of national government and civilization imminent. As the strife waxed fierce it came to be known as the *Gen-pei* war, *Gen* being the Chinese ideograph for Minamoto, and *Hei* for Taira, so that the one was known as the Genji and the other the Heike. In the quarrel of 1155 the Heike were victors, and also in the further dispute of 1159, known as the Heiji war, when their cruel and revengeful conduct in exterminating even the peaceful relatives of the vanquished showed that peace was impossible until one or the other clan was completely overcome. The outcome of this war was that the Fujiwara domination was transferred to the Heike clan, then under the leadership of the distinguished warrior and statesman Kiyomori, whose insatiable and reckless passion for beautiful women led him to consent to spare the lives of Yoritomo and Yoshitsune, the two infant sons of Yoshitomo, the slain Minamoto chief,

on condition that the beautiful widow, Tokawa, should enter the harem of Kiyomori. Herein was sealed the fate of the Heike cause, for no sooner had young Yoritomo come of age than he returned from exile, and conspired with his Hojo relatives for the overthrow of the Heike clan.

Kiyomori was, however, triumphant for a time. But after he succeeded in gaining complete control over the emperor and the central government, he proved more arrogant and overbearing than the Fujiwara, he forced the emperor to marry his daughter, and tried, after the imperial manner, to remove the national capital to a new site at Kobé, then Fuku-hara. The Minamoto interests eventually came to the rescue of the throne, and after the appearance of Yoritomo on the scene, all the vassals of that clan flocked to his aid, and soon one of the most bloody civil wars in Japanese history was in process. Yoritomo and his brother Yoshitsune proved to be warriors of undaunted heroism and great military genius.

After many battles they completely defeated the Heike forces by land, and by sea at Dan-noura near Shimonoseki in 1185. Now the Minamoto were supreme, and the emperor conferred on Yoritomo the title of *shogun*. Hitherto this had been a title of honour bestowed annually on the general who had been most successful in suppressing the aborigines and reclaiming land from them, but now it was conferred on one who had exterminated what was regarded as the pestilential Heike clan, and thenceforth it was to belong to the head of the family dominating the government of the day.

It is already obvious that for centuries the Chinese principle of basing rule on merit and might, rather than on heredity and rank, had been taking root in Japanese politics. The unique aspect of it on new soil was that it was made to work without a change of dynasty, a feat the Chinese had never succeeded in accomplishing. Under the shogunate the divine ruler was kept in seclusion, while government was entrusted to the military

dictator best able to maintain his position, which he usually did by making it hereditary, in defiance of the very principle he pretended to observe. The Japanese proverb has it that a great general never produces a great son, and since this proved true in the case of Yoritomo and most of his successors, the hereditary principle did not work in the shogunate any better than it did in the imperial family. Yoritomo was one of the greatest generals in Japanese history up to this time. As he left no son capable of retaining the shogunate, the authority passed under control of his relatives, the Hojo family, who acted as regents, establishing a still more novel form of government, which might be termed a triarchy, in which the country was ruled by an emperor through a shogun, who in turn ruled through a regent, but mainly in the regent's interest. Under such a scheme children proved naturally more easy of manipulation, and at one time there was a child emperor ruling through a child shogun by



means of a regent who dominated national affairs. After a century or more of such devices, the Hojo regency had to give way before a still more powerful family, the Ashikaga, who in turn dominated the throne for more than two centuries, until they again were overthrown by Oda Nobunaga, whose assassination established Hideyoshi, the Napoleon of Japan, as head of the government, and he again passed away and left affairs to his great general Ieyasu, who established the Tokugawa shogunate in 1600.

The state of civilization in Japan during the civil wars that prevailed most of the years between 1200 and 1600 can better be imagined than described. After Yoritomo's celebrated victory over the Heike forces in 1185, he determined to leave no representative of the clan alive, and he enforced his decree of extermination in the most merciless manner. Departing from all national precedent, he set up a new military capital of his own at Kamakura in 1192, and ruled the country as a

military dictator from this second capital. Thus removed from the seat of imperial authority, he hoped to preserve freedom from Court intrigue and Buddhist influence, as the emperor Kwammu had attempted to do when he removed the capital from Nara to Kyoto in 794. This proved to be, on the whole, a shrewd stroke of policy on the part of the shogun. Around the new centre of authority grew up quickly a vast city of more than a million people, relics of which still remain. The government of the first shogun was a much more highly organized system than Japan had hitherto known. He established an executive of State ministers like a modern government Cabinet, with military as well as civil governors in all the provinces, the one to keep an eye on the other. Every clan chief throughout the empire had to yield unquestioned allegiance to the shogun, no less than to the central government, but the latter had invariably to operate through the former. Law courts and penalties, similar to the

judiciary of China, were introduced and obeyed. All landholders, great and small alike had regularly to pay tax to the Kamakura authorities, the principle that all land belonged to the State was rigidly acted upon, for the shogun could remove a feudal lord and confiscate his fief if he proved obdurate. The shogun shared his revenue with the central government, but only in the proportion he deemed necessary, for he kept Kyōto no less in economic than in military and political subordination to Kamakura.

Each *daimyo* was made responsible for the peace and progress of his own domain. If one feudatory transgressed, another, or others, were set to bring him to order. Hitherto these chieftains had enjoyed a semi-independent rule of their own, all of which was now changed and the central authority rigidly imposed. We have seen how it was in these semi-independent daimyates that the *samurai* class had developed into a force that had eventually to be reckoned with. The *daimyo* had their

lands supervised by lieutenants called *tomōbē*, who had become freemen, and who managed the serfs and slaves. These agents had the task of getting the proper amount of work out of the dependents of the *daimyo*, either as slaves, or in rents for holdings. Should trouble arise, they had an armed force to quell it. The *tomōbē* often added to the acreage of their masters, and no questions were asked as to how it was done. Fully developed, this *samurai* class became one of the most important factors in maintaining peace in the rural districts, as well as the character of the provincial authority. To maintain the moral fibre of *samurai* character a stern code was formed, known as *bushido*, the way of the *bushi* or soldier. Its two outstanding principles were loyalty and filial piety. In so military a civilization the profession of the soldier was paramount. In feudal Japan he ranked next to the nobility. The four principal classes into which society was divided, known as the *Shi no I o sho*, were

soldiers, farmers, mechanics and merchants, ranked in the order named. For the *samurai* rigid rules of conduct were developed and made absolute. In this code the sword became the symbol of duty. The swordsmith was the most honoured of artists. In *bushido*, however, loyalty meant no more than the Confucian principle that the inferior must always submit to the superior in the interest of the latter. To his lord the *samurai* had to be obedient unto death, and the *samurai's* family must likewise obey him unto death. It was due to the code of honour that the *samurai* should exact vengeance for wrong done to his lord, to himself or to his family. He was to set no value on money, position or promotion. To enable him the more perfectly to obey the code, and use the more effectively his sword, the *samurai* was devoted to the practice of *zazen* as taught by the Zen sect of Buddhism. Under this esoteric system he was the better able to realize the illusory nature of existence and face death calmly. A proper under-

standing of introspection (*kanshin-ho*) and immobility of heart (*fudoshin*) was essential to achievement.

From an ethical point of view it must be admitted that this system hardened Japanese civilization, and left justice and mercy to take care of themselves. In fact, *bushido* was essentially a class code; it did nothing for the masses except to bring them more unmercifully under military domination. It could not promote the interests of a civilization based on natural rights. While *bushido* taught the *samurai* to sacrifice himself for his master, and his wife and children for the sake of himself, it taught the master no corresponding duty to the *bushi*, and the husband no corresponding duty to his wife and family. It was a conception of loyalty too narrow and one-sided to make a universal appeal. It was a loyalty less than national, even less than moral, for it was to one's own master, right or wrong, as against all others, even the sovereign and the State. The Japanese had no conception of

loyalty as a national virtue until modern times. Thus the *samurai* became an exclusive and unpopular class, with little or no regard for those below them. They could, and frequently did, cut down the common man at will. A system that cultivated private and neglected public morality could not last.

The more complete establishment of feudalism under Yoritomo was essential to the progress of society after the disintegration that followed so many years of civil strife: it was better than anarchy. But by it all subordinate force was driven to vassalage: the lesser nobles and their towns and villages; not municipalities, as in Europe, for Japan had no cities, apart from Kyoto, before the twelfth century. Families and religious institutions had to be submissive. All rights and gifts were in fief. It affected the minutest details of life. But none of the institutions older than feudalism renounced its form or the principles of its nature in coming under feudalism. Religion, aristocracy and monarchy con-

stantly sought deliverance from the shackles of feudalism in Japan, no less than in Europe, and finally did succeed in asserting their vital principles. But feudalism increased the importance of the few at the expense of the many, and made private property more important than public. It did, however, curb the wild licence of lawless times, and enforced a necessary discipline. But the discipline was for the lower rather than the higher class, where will knew no law save reserve of strength and risk of danger. Thus the relation between the higher and the lower was not a moral relation. The lord had the right of life and death over his slaves: they had to be and to live and toil as he alone decided, and he was free to sell them as he wished. Feudalism, therefore, could neither create nor maintain respect for law and order in the individual or in society. It could only force its will, however arbitrary. In Japan the people were no sooner free from feudalism than they began to evince more respect for the imperial house than for *their*



feudal lords, for the emperor represented the people and their gods, but the feudal lords stood for themselves alone.

Surrounded by all the feudal and military magnificence that he created for himself in the new city of Kamakura, Yoritomo was nevertheless a character particularly cruel and pagan. Jealous of the superior generalship of his younger brother Yoshitsune, he had him secretly assassinated, then caused his beautiful widow to dance before the tyrant and his concubines, and when her child was afterwards born, he had it killed, lest the seed of his brother, through whose genius he had won victory over the Heike, should rise up to molest his power. He sent his father-in-law, Hojo, all over the country to search out and slay all blood relatives of the Heike clan, and these were slaughtered, sparing neither age nor sex. He had that peculiar weakness of a certain type of diplomat and statesman, a fatal disposition to reticence and lack of candour, which has led to so many of the world's

catastrophes Time and again in the history of Japan, as also in that of Europe, we find occasions where a frank statement of opinion would have avoided dangerous issues Japanese feudal lords made war and slew thousands for points of honour too minute to be appreciable to a rational mind Had they plainly expressed their opinions, and said what course they intended to pursue under certain circumstances, the entire situation could have been saved Though Yoritomo was suspicious of the Buddhist hierarchy, he none the less, like many a military leader, felt the need of ecclesiastical support, and encouraged the temples of his new city to rival in splendour those of the imperial capital Seeing that he could not escape the hierarchy and hold the allegiance of the feudatories, he did his best to utilize religion in his own interest He ordered a colossal bronze statue of Amida to be cast for the principal temple at Kamakura, but he died before its completion There the statue still stands, facing the blue sea whose waves

twice removed the temple, a monument to the vanity of human wishes

After the death of Yoritomo the shogunate descended to his incapable son, and thence under the control of his father in law, Hojo Tokimasa, who kept both emperors and shoguns puppets in his power. The Hojo family policy was at first greatly furthered by the genius of that masterly woman, Masako. Many of the Hojo regents were remarkably efficient, they enforced law and order as Yoritomo had done, at least for a time, and were able to defeat the Mongol invasion of 1279, the last of the invasions that, through the centuries of the past, had peopled and colonized the islands of Nippon. But under a system where might dominated justice, right was always insecure. It is freely admitted by native historians that the judges of the time often took bribes from both parties in the case for which they sometimes delivered inscrutable verdicts. The Hojo found Confucianism a valuable ally in teaching the people to obey

rather than to understand. When modern jurists admit that under the Hojo regents justice was more impartially administered than it was previously, they only all the more condemn the past. The Hojo regents did appear to desire public approval as a matter of expediency; they did try to protect the people from the rapacity of the feudal lords, which the latter attempted to resume after the death of Yoritomo. But by 1325, when the Hojo regency ended, we see only a feeble, pleasure-loving officialdom, controlling puppet shoguns in the name of puppet emperors, with abounding injustice, cruelty and poverty everywhere. When taxes were not promptly paid, or failed through poverty, the wives and daughters of the delinquent farmers were seized as hostages, to the universal indignation of the people. But there was no way of escaping from such outrage. The regent spent his days surrounded by his numerous concubines witnessing lewd dramas, dances and dog fights.

The Hojo interpretation of the Confucian

principle of priority for talent evinced even less respect for the divine emperor than any preceding family domination of the throne. Hojo Yoshitaki exiled three ex-emperors in 1221, for the good of the State, but really in his own interests. The displacement of one puissant family by another, whether as dictator or as shogun or as regent, seemed to make very little difference in the civilization. The weakness of character displayed by the later Hojo regents made them an easy prey to the greater feudal lords. And when the emperor called on the head of the Ashikaga family to save the throne from further humiliations, he marched upon the capital and drove out the Hojo officials, and finally overthrew the Hojo stronghold in the north, and the Kama-kura régime was at an end. But when the emperor was thus set free, he displayed a spirit of capricious favouritism that ignored and angered the men who deserved most recognition. On this account, Takauji, the Ashikaga leader, deposed the ruler and en-

throned a prince of his own choosing. The old emperor escaped to the south, where he set up a rival court, and Japan for some fifty five years had two emperors.

There was now a greater degree of contempt for constituted authority than ever before. Both national and feudal loyalty were hopelessly divided. It was a period of the most cruel deceptions and treacheries, greatly reflecting on the character of the civilization. The attempt to impose Chinese politics on Yamato culture was obviously a failure. The southern emperor stood for the old national principle of a hereditary monarchy, while the ruler set up by the Ashikaga represented only rule by family domination. The feudal lords were driven back to where they were before the rise of the shogunate, and could fight and take each other's lands at will. The country was afflicted with the cult of worshipping heroes who supplanted emperors and became despots. As in China so then in Japan, bribery and corruption were the principal official motives

of the age, while in all ranks of society dissipation was rife. In 1467 and for over eleven years, the country was deluged with blood. Kyoto was left in ruins from fire and plunder, and all due to a dispute between two families in regard to the shogunate. As the Ashikaga were of Taira, and not of Minamoto blood, they could not be shoguns, and had always to find a Minamoto connection for that office, hence the possibility of disputes. The work that Yoritomo did in suppressing refractory lords would have to be done all over again. But for this achievement Japan had to wait another century. Riot, brigandage and insurrection were intermittent, yet destructive of life and property. Few of the clan chieftains died in their beds. The poisoner was abroad in the land, all cooks had their price. Kenko (1350) not a very robust moral example himself, yet complained that religion was confined to the monastic establishments. He intimates that drunkenness was common, and that he could not understand why people

took pleasure in making others intoxicated against their will

During the more than 250 years of Ashikaga rule, two heads of that clan were slain by their own vassals, five died in exile and one committed suicide. In derision of Confucianism some wag or wit named the period the *gekokujo* age, which means, "the upper overthrown by the lower," a joke on the *bushido* code. It is indeed a weary record of broken promises, violated allegiances and family feuds, the dark ages of Japanese history. All the feudal captains had their own castles, and armies to plunder and annex neighbouring estates as occasion served. No man was certain of being able to retain a wife if she was pretty, as abduction was common. The shogun Yoshinori (1441) executed mistresses simply for disobedience, but some of them happened to have more courageous relatives than the victims of Henry VIII, for the shogun was eventually assassinated. A civilization that sets small value on human life naturally



sets less on money, the fruit of human life; and consequently vast sums were squandered on extravagance and dissipation, and that in the face of famine and the most sordid poverty. Yoshimasa, one of the most powerful of the Ashikaga, built a mansion called the *Hama-no goshō*, which cost not less than four and a half millions sterling, and he spent £150,000 more on the erection of a parturition chamber for his concubines. The *Kinkakuji*, with its roof (ceiling) of gold, and the *Ginkakuji*, with its roof of silver, were the handiwork of the most celebrated architects and artists of the day. Gorgeous palaces, æsthetic amusements and frivolous society seemed to go together, without regard to the misery and squalor of the people. The bodies of many who died of starvation were often left long without burial, to befoul the atmosphere. By the end of the fifteenth century the imperial Court was so impoverished that an emperor had to sustain himself by selling examples of his calligraphy; and the body of an emperor

had to remain uninterred for forty days because the imperial treasury was empty

During this era known as the Muromachi era was introduced the celebrated *cha no yu*, or tea ceremony, alleged to have ethical no less than æsthetic significance, calculated to cultivate such virtues as purity, urbanity, courtesy and imperturbability, virtues which were merely ceremonial. Costly robes and utensils of faience were essential to the function. Master artists like Sesshu created the most exquisite designs in porcelain for it, the inner and unseen parts evincing the most wonderful ingenuity in concealment of art. We have an echo of this principle in the disposition of Japanese ladies to wear the costliest fabrics as inner garments. *Ikebana*, the art of flower arrangement, was another of these æsthetic amusements which became fashionable, and is still practised in all genteel society. It is the art of setting flowers or blossoming shrubs in a vase so as to enable the species to reveal accurately its individual spirit or character.

Each plant has a distinctive genius and manner, as well as a distinctive colour, which, by appropriate poise, it can adequately express. The art of *ikebana* aimed not so much at symmetry of poise as at balance of inequalities. In metal work no less than in science the art of the period showed a high degree of perfection. The pictorial artists of the period were also unexcelled, encouraged, as they were, by warriors who wanted their exploits depicted and preserved for after ages. Then flourished such distinctive names as Chodenzu, Josetsu, Masanobu and Motonobu, who achieved the maximum of effect with the minimum of effort and colour. Literature declined into a priestly craft confined mainly to the monasteries. But, in a society that appreciated action a form of drama began to appear, at first under religious auspices like the mediæval mystery and miracle plays of Europe to bring moral and spiritual ideas before the upper classes. The masks and robes worn in this lyrical drama, called the *No*, were triumphs of artistic

achievement. But religion, which had become itself military, trying to profit by the spoils of war, had little effect either morally or spiritually on that singing, dancing, poetizing society of sensual courtiers and their mistresses. A civilization in which society gives itself over to corrupting pleasure, while the masses are left to be exploited by hard task-masters, is not one to encourage mercy and truth. The Chinese records say that at this time Japanese pirates were so numerous and so fierce that they devastated large sections of the Chinese coast, slaying thousands of people and carrying off their wives and other property. Even the monasteries quarrelled with each other and fought like feudal lords, and in one such monastic battle some 3000 monks were slain.

When things were at their worst there appeared on the scene a stern but brilliant soldier in the person of Oda Nobunaga who emerged out of the north, determined to be to the Japan of his time what Yoritomo was to

his day he aimed to overthrow the Ashikaga and establish again imperial rule. He was opposed by most of the southern lords as well as by the monks. In 1573 he entered the imperial capital, deposed the shogun, and the Ashikaga régime suddenly came to an end. A daring soldier, and a man of great ability, Oda believed himself an incarnation of the god of war, and erected a magnificent shrine where his spirit was apotheosized even during his lifetime, and the public were ordered to pay divine reverence before the altar. In 1543, while Oda was still at the height of his career, the first Europeans arrived in Japan. Portuguese wrecked on their way to China. Oda welcomed them and asked them to trade with Japan, as they were doing with China. Soon Portuguese ships began to make regular trips, bringing arms, ammunition and other commodities for which fabulous prices were paid in pure gold. Within six months after the first foreign cannon were delivered the Japanese had 600 guns, which they made

themselves after the foreign models. The Christian mission, started in 1549 by Francis Xavier, made phenomenal progress, even some of the feudal lords becoming converts to the new faith. But the superior military equipment introduced by the Portuguese only made it all the more difficult to control the disorderly *daimyo*, who all now clamoured for a share of the foreign trade, especially in arms and ammunition. Oda welcomed the missionaries not only for their supply of arms, but also because they united with him in opposing the monks and priests who were Oda's bitter enemies. Oda had to suppress the militant opposition of the monks by force, besieging their great establishment in Kyoto and putting thousands of them to the sword. Such a man was bound to face great opposition, and so he was assassinated by one of his own officers, who took offence at Oda for tapping the man's bald head with a fan.

Oda was succeeded by one of his generals, Hideyoshi Toyotomi, the most distinguished

military genius that Japan has ever produced. The son of a poor woodcutter, this diminutive and awkward-looking man arose from the post of horseboy to Oda Nobunaga to become that hero's greatest general, and the winner of most of Oda's victories. By sheer force of genius he soon reached the highest position in the government, conquered all the *daimyo* who challenged his authority, united for the first time the whole empire under one leader, and was made not only *kwampaku*, prime minister, but also *taiko*, or commander-in-chief, by the emperor. In military genius Hideyoshi was not inferior to any man of ancient or modern times. Notoriously independent feudal lords like Mori, Shimadzu and Hojo he quickly subdued, to the awe of the whole empire, until none was left to question his authority. In order to get blue blood into his family, and be able thus to rank in blood as in ability, he had himself adopted into the Fujisawa clan, after which the emperor conferred on him the titles mentioned. Yet Hideyoshi was one of the most machia-

vellian of all Japanese statesmen, which is saying much. As a tactician in any capacity, political or military, he was unequalled, nor has he ever been matched in the art of deceiving, entrapping and slaying opponents. But he had some principles of higher statesmanship that none of his predecessors seemed able to command. He believed that a conquered foe always remains a foe, whereas a reconciled or a conciliated one is apt to become a friend. This principle he practised in the case of Shimadzu, the greatest of the southern *daimyo*, whom he defeated in battle and then took as a hostage to Kyoto, making the son of the conquered chieftain *daimyo* of Satsuma in his father's stead. If a man had a good head, Hideyoshi allowed him to keep it, but on condition that he used it thenceforth in Hideyoshi's interests. But honesty and purity were not among his virtues. When he wanted money he did not hesitate to threaten a whole town with destruction if the amount was not promptly paid.

At first Hideyoshi tolerated the mission-



aries; but later, finding that they disapproved of his morals, in having 300 concubines and 700 similar slaves, and in collecting some of the prettiest of the Christian girls to replenish his harem, he ordered the suppression of the foreign religion. Oda had tried to suppress the monks while favouring the Christians, but Hideyoshi found in the monks his ablest agents, especially in the elaborate system of espionage he set going, for the monks were all over the country, and knew everything that went on. Hideyoshi's principal pimp for the securing of damsels for the *taiko's* harem was a Buddhist priest, and the priests were also his chief agents in bringing the Christians to martyrdom. It must be admitted that in some respects the Jesuit fathers allowed things that offended even the pagan society they had come to convert. Hideyoshi criticised the debauchery of the foreign sailors, who did not scruple to hear Mass and then proceed to become vile and drunken. He objected also to the foreigners taking Japanese subjects and selling them in the slave markets of Asia. Foreigners

killed and ate useful animals like cattle. The Jesuits, moreover, encouraged the burning of Buddhist temples, and introduced the military principles of Loyola, which made it obligatory on the part of *daimyo* converts to proscribe paganism in their respective territories. All pagan society was on a military basis, and when the Church adopted such principles it was no match for the Japanese. There is no doubt that the Japanese were much impressed by the imposing vestments of the Jesuit processions along the streets, and the stately ceremonial of the Mass, but they thought the calvaries erected in various places a very peculiar form of religion, which it well might seem, in a country where crucifixion was the fate of criminals. When Christians were being crucified for their faith, their fellow Church members gathered round them in prayer, but the heathen supposed that they were praying to them, as before the crucifix. During his expedition to Kyushu, Hideyoshi noticed that many *daimyo* were favourable to the new religion, and were equipping themselves with

foreign weapons, and he suspected that they had more respect for the priests than for him. By 1585 there were 187 Jesuit fathers and some 300,000 converts in Japan, and seventeen feudal lords had submitted to baptism. When Hideyoshi issued his edict against the Christians in 1585, and it was not promptly obeyed, he ordered 25 Christians to have their ears and noses mutilated, and then made them parade the streets and thus march to Nagasaki, where they were crucified as a warning.

Hideyoshi established himself in a great palace with all the external magnificence of an emperor, and, like Oda, he designed a grand shrine where his spirit was to be worshipped as the guardian of the nation. Having conquered many *daimyo* and confiscated their estates, he soon became enormously rich. He was accustomed to demonstrate his importance by inviting officials and feudal lords to banquets at his palace, and then bestowing on them presents of fabulous value. When spies informed him of the suspicious conduct of any *daimyo*, Hideyoshi

promptly invited him to pay him a visit at the capital, where, on account of the retinue required and the expensive presents involved, the guest was faced by bankruptcy, and never gave any further trouble. But the laws he enacted and strictly enforced were practical and effective, especially in protecting the people from the plunder of unscrupulous feudal lords. His creed for others was avoid passion, wine, women, disputation, jokes, boredom, thoughtless persons, fire, extravagant thought and conduct, contempt of others, and he advised all to rise early and always to think of the future. He continued the custom of having clothing meticulously regulated according to class and rank.

Having subdued all his enemies and secured to the nation a unity of authority never before experienced, his great armies and their generals were at a loose end, and to keep them out of mischief at home he sent them on an expedition against Korea, because that country had refused to permit his passage through the

peninsula on the way to China which he desired to conquer. The 200,000 soldiers sent there was the largest expeditionary force ever sent overseas up to the time of the South African War. After ravaging the peninsula in vain, 37,000 human noses were sent home as a memorial to the deeds of his troops, and these gruesome trophies were buried, and a grand monument was erected over them to appease the spirits of the victims thus mutilated and killed. The forces in Korea were ultimately defeated, however, for after the Koreans succeeded in cutting off his sea communications the armies had to withdraw. At the height of his glory he was seized with a mysterious malady and suddenly died 1598, leaving behind him a reputation for shrewdness and cruelty that can never be effaced. He had six of his concubines beheaded on suspicion, and twenty youths crucified for scribbling on his palace wall, and he beheaded his nephew and all his family on suspicion of aspiring to rivalry with him.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

(A.D. 1600—1868)

For more than a thousand years family ambition had been the bane of Japanese civilization. The Sukune, the Soga, the Fujiwara, the Taira, the Minamoto, the Hojo, the Ashikaga and again the Minamoto impersonated by the Tokugawa, usurped imperial prerogative and ruled Japan in their own interest. After the sudden demise of Hideyoshi in 1597, Ieyasu Tokugawa, the greatest of the Taiko's generals, to whose care the deceased dictator had committed his son and heir, Hideyori, at once began to lay plans to supplant his ward and further establish hereditary control of the country. Ieyasu considered that he had the same right to displace Hideyori that Hideyori's father, Hide-

yoshi, had to supplant the heir of Oda Nobunaga; and he proceeded to carry out his design with a subtle cruelty and chicanery as merciless as that of his famous predecessor. It is very remarkable that, having made ample provision for the possibility of progeny, with a harem of 300 concubines, Hideyoshi nevertheless left only one son, and he no match for the situation<sup>1</sup> he had to face.

In deference to his immense ability as a general, Hideyoshi had made Ieyasu lord of the eight provinces of the Kwanto region, in the north-east, with his feudal city at Yedo. In the contest with Hideyori he could, therefore, depend on the sympathy of his Kwanto vassals; but the south, where Hideyori had so many friends, would be against him. But no sooner had the south taken up arms against him than he vanquished them in the great battle of Sekigahara in October, 1600, when he had 40,000 heads tied together by their topknots and strung across poles on the bloody field, in order to promote his officers

according to the number of heads they could produce. Failing by an elaborate system of espionage to find occasion of fault with Hideyori, Ieyasu determined to reduce the great wealth the son had inherited from his father, by obliging him to reconstruct a costly temple that had been destroyed by an earthquake; and when the task was completed Ieyasu detected in an inscription on one of the bells an insult to the Tokugawa family, by the use of an ideograph in the name of Ieyasu; and on this score he made war on Hideyori, completely exterminating both him and his family in 1615, when over 100,000 were left dead on the field. Having confiscated the estates of the fallen, both in this and the previous conflict with the southern *daimyo*, Ieyasu was now immensely wealthy, with numerous fiefs in his gift. As he had thus made peace, as Hideyoshi had done, the emperor made him shogun, and the Minamoto supremacy was re-established.

Ieyasu proceeded to create at Yedo a seat



of authority and imposing splendour that quite threw the imperial capital in the shade Thither he compelled all the *daimyo* of the empire to proceed in costly array once every second year to do him homage, and they had to maintain permanent mansions there, where their wives and families were to be left as hostages for the good behaviour of their lords By thus keeping them under his eye, and making their establishments expensive, he reduced their power and opportunity of rebellion At the imperial Court at Kyoto he placed a *shoshidaï*, or governor, whose duty it was to keep authority there acquiescent, and to watch the conduct of the Court nobles The Court and its officials he induced to devote their time to æsthetic dissipations, and to take no interest in politics, or the affairs of the empire, and toward the *daimyo* in residence at Yedo he pursued a similar policy The *daimyo* of the nation he divided into two classes - the *fudai*, who had always been loyal to Tokugawa interests, and the *to-ama*,

representing those who had submitted to him only after battle. Between doubtful or suspected lords he placed his best friends, to divide the malcontents by having loyal estates between them, whose lords kept watch and ward. Less liberal than Hideyoshi, he spared none that challenged his authority, decapitating even the little children of Hideyori. The code of *bushido* demands fair treatment, at least between equals, but Ieyasu revealed no trace of it. The Taiko had been an innovator and an originator, but Ieyasu, more typical of his race, was an imitator of other men's plans and an adapter of their devices to his own uses. He was an adept at the ancient stratagem of disabling opponents by demoralizing them, he kept his feudal lords cooped up in their Yedo mansions surrounded by sensual pleasures and provided with dissipations that turned many of them into worthless drones or debauchees, incapable of opposition to the shogun. Here may be found the secret of decay in many a

noble family Always suspicious of men of genius, he excluded them from political activity; and if they declined to submit, they went to the block. Ieyasu was appointed shogun in 1603, and two years afterwards he retired, in order to allow his son, Hidetada, to succeed him, so that he could test the son's fitness for office before his own death He died in 1617, at the age of seventy three, and his spirit was enshrined in the most magnificent of shrines, the Toshogu at Nikko, where, as Gongen, one of the avatars of Buddha, he is worshipped to this day.

None of the successors of Ieyasu in the Tokugawa shogunate proved equal to him, though some of them inherited his shrewdness as a statesman The third shogun, Iyemitsu, clearly inherited his spirit of cruelty, as was revealed in his heartless treatment of the Christians The Tokugawa shoguns pursued the Fujiwara policy of introducing their daughters into the imperial Court as consorts in order to control affairs in the interest of

the family; nor was there any hesitation to depose an emperor if he proved obdurate. Every department of life and rank was regimented to the minutest detail: dress, the materials thereof, manners, amusements and religion. New laws were enacted by the *bakufu*, or curtain government, as the shogun's régime came to be called; and the laws were enforced by the most rigid judicature that the nation had known. Thus by force of arms and law the Tokugawa maintained peace in Japan for 253 years. The *samurai* became the ideal man of the period, he was made to take an active interest in arms, archery, horsemanship, and even in literature and art. For soldiers, drink, gambling and all the more dangerous forms of dissipation were prohibited. Needless to say, this rule was not so strictly enforced as was law in general. Criminals were promptly executed, saving trouble and expense. The various *daimyo* were not permitted to exchange visits, but maintain an independent existence, quite dis-

interested in their neighbours. A careful system of espionage kept the *bakufu* adequately informed of the doings of all feudatories. Most of the family dominations of Japan tried to distinguish their rule by promulgating law codes. The *Yuigon*, or Legacy of Ieyasu, was probably not composed in his day, though historians differ on this point. It embraces one hundred chapters each dealing briefly with a different subject. Ieyasu had arranged before his death that, in case of there being no heir in his line to succeed to the shogunate, the shogun should be selected from one of the *Gosanke*, or three illustrious families, descended from his three sons whom he had made *daimyo* of K<sub>1</sub>, Owari and Mito. No approach could be made to the throne except through the shogun who had all appointments in his own hand.

Every *daimyo* was obliged to connect himself with some sect of Buddhism for that religion had done its utmost to promote and establish Tokugawa interests, and when the

third shogun undertook to proscribe the Christian religion in 1638, the Buddhist priesthood became his most efficient agency in exterminating the foreign faith and its adherents. The persecution of the Christians forms one of the most cruel and inhuman records in the annals of history and civilization. More than 200,000 suffered martyrdom in ways too excruciating for description. The civilization never really recovered from the demoralization which cruelty and injustice always promote. The most that can be said for Tokugawa civilization is that it enforced law and maintained peace, but it failed to contribute much toward a greater elevation of moral sentiment, the progress of the period was intellectual rather than moral, and such progress is usually unstable. Refinement has its vices no less than barbarism. Vice can change its form without losing its essence. The main policy was to keep all subservient to the shogunate, and the common man subservient to his lord, and to effect this end the

laws were often kept secret so that circum-  
 spection might be all the more imperative.  
 There was no idea of emancipating the masses  
 through education and the establishment of  
 natural rights. Confucianism was supreme,  
 the weaker had to submit to the stronger  
 without question. The upper had absolute  
 authority over the lower in all the relations  
 of life. To know how to die was an important  
 principle of duty. Justice and fair play were  
 less important than loyalty, propriety and  
 etiquette, which pertained mainly to the  
 duty of the inferior to the superior. It was a  
 man's civilization, as against woman. Her  
 rights were few and easily adjusted. So  
 uncertain was justice that few litigants dared  
 appeal to the courts, but usually agreed on  
 mutual settlement. The six degrees of  
 penalty, according to crime were reprimand,  
 confinement, flogging, banishment, exile to  
 an island, death, the latter penalty having  
 five degrees: decapitation, the same with  
 exposure of the head, burning at the stake,

crucifixion, sawing asunder. These applied only to commoners. From the *samurai* upwards the offender might be allowed to commit suicide in case of a capital offence.

The foreign policy of the *bakufu* was one of its most fatal elements in hindering the progress of civilization at this time. The aim was to get rid of all aliens in the country, and to maintain a policy of strict isolation from all other countries. The policy was not enforced to the letter, for as long as the shogun found profitable dealings with the little Dutch settlement at Nagasaki, he allowed a certain degree of trade to go on, the Dutch not being regarded as Christians. But when Christianity was proscribed in 1638 all foreigners were expelled, save the Dutch, who had helped the shogun to expel the Spanish and Portuguese, and all who failed to obey the deportation order were executed.

Why the *bakufu* allowed Hideyoshi's edict against the Christians to lapse until now, and then re-issued it with vengeance, is an



interesting aspect of the question. It is probable that the rapid spread of the foreign religion alarmed the shogun, as it had alarmed Hideyoshi. It was feared that, if the nation should become largely Christian, the shogunate would be overthrown, since the country would be so largely Europeanized. During the first thirty years of the Tokugawa rule great pains were taken to learn the condition of civilization in Europe. Through spies thus sent, the shogun learned of the religious persecutions there, and inferred that if the Christians got the upper hand in Japan they would pursue a similar policy. If there was likely to be an Inquisition, the shogun would be first in the field. Japan also learned how the Spanish whose nationals were the chief missionaries and merchants had conquered and decimated Mexico and Peru, had attempted to invade England with a vast naval force, had also taken the Philippine Islands, next door to Japan and so the shogun feared that the next step would be an at-

tempted conquest of Japan itself. These suspicions were confirmed by the assurances of the English and Dutch.

The first Englishman to arrive in Japan was Will Adams, a pilot major in a Dutch East Indiaman, who was cast ashore in Kyushu in 1600. The shogun treated him well and used him to teach European shipbuilding, and as a source of general information on European affairs. In time the British East India Company despatched ships to Japan, and there was a British factory in the country from 1613 to 1623, when it was closed through failure to compete with the Dutch. The shogun was much impressed by the hatred that prevailed between the representatives of the Protestant countries on the one side and those of the Roman Catholic countries on the other. The Dutch and English used to capture ships of Spanish or Portuguese ownership, and bring them as prizes into Japanese ports, where the shogun claimed the spoils and executed the passengers and crew as

Christians. The shogun was still in fear of the foreigners equipping his *daimyo* with European armaments and endangering his supremacy. After the Christian uprising against cruel treatment at Shimabara in 1637, the *bakufu* decided to prohibit the foreign religion and to exterminate the Church. Japan was thenceforth deprived of foreign trade and Christian influence for 250 years. All ships of foreign build were destroyed, and shipping was restricted to coastal trade in native junks. As already mentioned, through the little Dutch colony, permitted to remain at Nagasaki, the shogun was able to obtain what European goods and knowledge he required. In this way the shogun heard of the regicide of Cromwell, which prejudiced him further against Western civilization, not because it was worse than his own, but because it was equally dangerous.

None of these precautions, however, could save *bakufu* officialdom from the demoralization that paganism permits, if not encourages :

luxury, absolutism and cruelty beget licence and sensuality. The Tokugawa shoguns allowed themselves to lapse into idleness and effeminacy, to neglect the affairs of State for indulgence in voluptuous or artistic pleasures, and thus left the conduct of affairs wholly to their ministers and councillors, until their direct personal authority became as nominal as that of the emperor. These years show the heavy price the nation had to pay for its self complacency and seclusion. Laxity of moral fibre afflicted all classes. It is significant that one of the shoguns offered prizes to ladies establishing the highest reputation for chastity. As for men, there were no prizes, for there would be no competitors. The wealth and splendour of the shogun's mansion with its 20,000 servants, formed a striking contrast to the frugality he imposed on others, especially on the *samurai* and their families. The Jesuit letters of the time affirm that no European capital could rival Yedo, which was a city of mansions and

devoid of slums. Yet the literature and drama of the period revealed a grossness of obscenity that could only have been a reflection of the poison permeating the wealth and glory of Yedo society. Great patriots like Matsudaira Sadanobu arose to protest against the national decline but they were suppressed. Between 1640 and 1840 there were twenty two famines, in some villages not an inhabitant was left. The dead were eaten to escape death. And all the while officials were enacting regulations to restrict extravagance in dress and pleasure, though not to lessen the numerous brothels.

Another aspect of Yedo civilization was the extent to which Confucianism had displaced Buddhism in the regulation of society. Religion had become political and had practically itself adopted Confucianism as a convenient way of controlling the people in its own interest. And this attitude continued for most of the period. As interpreted by the system of Shushi, in vogue in Japan, this

philosophy hardened the intellect and mechanized the morals of the nation, until loyalty meant indifference to all humane relations, in duty to lords and superiors generally. Loyalty and piety alike consisted in duty and obedience to superiors. Loyalty justified any crime. What scholasticism did to free the European mind by initiating new intellectual movements from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, the Tsung philosophy failed to do for Japan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The want of an Aquinas, a Roger Bacon, a Galileo and a Newton was sorely felt. The dawn of the nineteenth century found Japan very much where Europe was in the days of William of Occam five centuries before. There was no way of discriminating between mythology and history, nor any consciousness of the significance of world relations. The impersonal tendency of Buddhist philosophy harmonized with the Confucian devotion to nature, and the disposition to keep

the masses impersonal and obedient to authority. The disputes in intellectual circles between the Chutz and the Wang interpretations of Chinese philosophy had no appreciable effect on society, though the savants of modern Japan claim that such influence is discernible. It may freely be admitted, however, that the controversy between the *Wagakusha*, or native schools of learning, and the *Kangakusha*, or Chinese scholars, led to a revival of Shinto studies that proved how little at rest was the native mind under feudal and Confucian domination. These thinkers sowed the seed which took root and eventually overthrew the shogunate and modernized Japan.

The leaders in the production of this literature were thinkers like Mabuchi (1607-1769), Motoori (1732-1801) and Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843). There was Kado Atsumaro, too, who protested against the reversion from nature to sensuality in art and society, it was due, he thought, to the substitution of

artifice for art in life and conduct. There was, for those able to appreciate it, a literature in which love, jealousy, revenge and the harlot's stock-in-trade were not the chief features. Scholars like Kinzo, Saikwa, Doshun, Shunsai and Kaibara ornamented restricted intellectual circles, and produced works read by the cultured few. Moralists like Kaibara opposed the popular literature that was debasing society, but, like so many others queered by the Confucian pitch, he ascribed the evils to woman, and directed how she was to be kept in her proper place of subordination. It is characteristic of a pagan civilization to attribute its moral evils to woman, which is always a libel on woman, even in a pagan civilization. The most influential author in the revival of Shinto, and native studies generally, was Mabuchi. His brilliant pupil, Hirata Atsutane, contended that the shogunate was a usurpation of imperial prerogative, and an anomaly in Japanese civilization. He was promptly



banished by the *bakufu*. The same author struck at the irrationality of Confucian philosophy, which insisted on a universe governed by principles, yet devoid of deity. Was not the idea of principle inconceivable apart from mind? Such writers made Japan think, and when Japan begins to think, action is not long delayed. Even a relative of the shogun, Mitsukuni, Prince of Mito, known as the Mæcenas of Japan, compiled a national history called the *Dai Nihonshi*, and another great work entitled the *Nihongwaishi*, both of which tended to show that the shogunate was an anomaly and a usurpation.

It is most remarkable how this good literature, which could only have been read by the few, was in time able to effect great changes in Japanese civilization, in spite of the flood of pernicious writings that covered the country. In a society so rigidly regimented and conventional, sin alone was free. Penalty applied to crime, but not to the sin that caused the crime. Imprisoned liberty could

only avenge its treatment by licentiousness. Literature and art alone afforded means of free expression in such a society; and consequently the tendency was for fiction to be immoral and art grotesque. There was an increasing demand for popular literature in the later Tokugawa days, most of which, however, was pernicious, if not pornographic, such as the tales of Jisho and Kiseki, and so did not improve civilization. From behind its prison bars art grimaced at society in the most grotesque forms, or else indulged in conventional depictions of nature and low life. It was to some extent a satire on reality, since reality could not be expressed. Popular songs like the *gidayu*, *jururi* and *dodoitsu* in some measure became an echo of the long-suppressed passion for justice that smouldered among the masses. Drama continued to remain for the most part a marionette performance, until the appearance of Chikamatsu (1653-1724), who succeeded in creating plays with a definite plot abounding in dramatic

situations, leading on to catastrophe, but even these were full of combats, tortures and suicides, appealing to a dull minded public not bored by its own image

As Buddhism was long the established religion of Japan, it must be held responsible for the ethical ideals and consequent moral condition of civilization in the Tokugawa era. Obtaining a firm foothold in the country during the sixth and seventh centuries, the religion ousted Shinto except in ancestor-worship, and continued to be the principal factor in the spiritual guidance of the nation down to modern times. The nationalist writers, already mentioned, were really in protest against Buddhism no less than Confucianism, for rendering the old faith in the divine descent of the emperor merely a tradition, and the sanctity with which he was invested merely nominal. The compromise of Buddhism with paganism was too close to leave the Indian creed an effective or efficient corrective of unethical ideals and practices.

More of a philosophy than a religion, Buddhism failed to meet the more vital needs of a people averse from metaphysics and dependent on personal conceptions of deity. In its attempts to transform itself from a philosophy into a religion, Buddhism divided into two schools, the Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle, for the philosophically minded, and the Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle, for plain folk. The Hinayana school aimed at simplicity and to come within human comprehension, especially in its negative aspects—it told men what they must *not* do, if they desired to be saved, while the Mahayana school was positive, and prescribed what man must do to be saved. The two sides of life were thus represented, the naughty who do too much, and the lazy who do too little. But it implied no Greek ideal to avoid excess. The abstinences of the Hinayana school were murder, adultery, stealing, lying, wrath, riches and so on, after the manner of the Decalogue. The requirements of the Mahayana school were truth,

virtue, fortitude and self-effacement. But the system was enveloped in an intricacy of many thousand doctrines and conditions that baffled the Japanese mind. Numerous sects in bitter opposition developed through the centuries and made religious confusion worse confounded. In mediæval Japan the monks were very militant and fought each other until forcibly suppressed. In a military civilization the Zen sect proved most popular, because it was adopted by the *samurai* for the sake of its *zazen* system of esoteric control of the mind in facing emergency; it taught that death had no terror and the grave no reality.

But the moral confusion created by the pantheistic teaching of Buddhism, as well as from its polytheistic proclivities, the Japanese mind was never able to overcome. Pantheism knows no moral distinctions, all is deity, good and evil alike. Moreover, if all be illusion, good and evil, truth and falsehood must be illusory, non-existent and vain. Buddha is the only reality, but of what use

can such reality be if goodness, beauty and truth are illusions? The attempt to absorb Shinto and its innumerable deities, with its system of ancestor-worship, created a polytheistic eclecticism that was morally no less than intellectually confusing. The native deities were accepted as avatars of Buddha, but the sons of Shinto could not understand a deity that cared for all alike, they preferred deities that could afford to devote their whole attention to one race or one family, and honour a fair division of labour. The Japanese have always been disposed to care for little gods each of whom can do one thing and do it well. They consider theology much less appreciable than bacteriology. Their idea of deity is much more akin to our conception of germs or electrons, than to either Buddhist or Christian theology. Nor was the Buddhist idea of Nirvana, as an extinction of self, a doctrine that could attract a healthy mind. If the soul of man was an illusion, what did religion matter?

A more definite contribution of Buddhism to Japanese civilization was seen in the realm of metaphysics, literature and art. The Indian faith created some conception of the universal in a civilization that was purely national and self-centred. It forced the tribal to fuse into the national, and encouraged loyalty to become a national instead of a clan virtue. It thus laid the foundation of a larger unity. Although the masses of the people were not content with Amida, but insisted on having their own little deities as well, yet the leaders, on whom civilization always so much depends, were strongly influenced by the universal implications of philosophic Buddhism, and this insistence on universals enlarged even the popular conception of human destiny. Shinto did not definitely distinguish between men and animals; the effect of this life on the next was ignored, as in Confucianism. Buddhism supplied the ethic here that Shinto lacked. But it was on literature and art that the alien faith had

the widest and most beneficial influence. It created not only a national literature, but cultivated a language capable of producing that literature. In art, too, Buddhism found nothing and created everything, even the spirit of æsthetic appreciation now almost universal in Japan.

We have seen, however, that great art and great literature are not enough to secure the progress of civilization. Unless religion can induce great personality, it fails to that extent as an *impetus to higher civilization*. If a pure and intelligible religion be essential to social progress, Buddhism did not fully meet the needs of Japan. If most of the realities of which man is conscious be illusory, life becomes one prolonged doubt, and pessimism finds free scope. Thus Buddhism created clouds in the mind of a people already too confused by paganism. The foreign religion never succeeded in giving Japan any true conception of deity. Without a rational conception of the character of God religion



can never inspire perfection of human character, even to the extent of regarding cruelty as beastly and beneath true manhood. A progressive civilization can never tolerate a religion that implies deity to be less than perfect humanity. To propound a theology which attempts to exhibit the character of God as the "Great Unconscious" is to mock civilization. A further aid to pessimism was the conception of *kharma*, implying that the present is hopelessly the creation of the past, which blighted Japanese life with a fatalism that was, and still is, a decided deterrent to progress. Buddhism saddened, though it could not wholly depress, the spirit of Japan. Even music became as pessimistic as poetry and pictorial art, and was limited to five notes, because there were five planets and five primal elements. All music had to be in a minor key, and all its chords subdued to melancholy. Great temple bells, of half a hundred tons, sob and moan across the fair landscape of Japan, in solemn reverbera-

tion. It is the same sombre tone that pervades the national literature, the pain that is born of all desire. Modern education is leading Japan to perceive that a logical acceptance of Buddhism involves atheism, since Buddha himself did not believe in a personal deity. Indications are not wanting that the nation must turn elsewhere for hope and light. The inference is that if Buddhism, after an opportunity of fifteen hundred years, has done so little for Japan, can it meet the moral and spiritual needs of so great a people?

## CHAPTER X

### MODERN JAPAN

(A D. 1868—1927)

WHEN Japan was obliged to enter into diplomatic relations with Western nations during the years following 1854, civilization had reached about the same stage of development as in twelfth-century Europe. Society was rigorously, and only too often unfairly and cruelly, divided into superiors and inferiors, in complex gradations, with no system of justice higher than force or tradition to decide rights and relations. The population, which, owing to war, pestilence and famine, had increased by only 4,000,000 in the previous three centuries, at this time roughly totalled about 33 000,000, all under 270 feudal lords, who lived in pomp and luxury in imposing castles, surrounded by bands of *samurai* who

saw to it that their masters' word was law. It was not uncommon to see headless trunks of ordinary people lying by the roadside, testifying to the keenness of the *samurai* sword, swift to avenge the slightest insult, real or fancied. The people were without rights, privileges or freedom, in the modern sense. Justice was for the strong, the prisons were infernos of foulness and misery unspeakable, where fiendish torture was a daily occurrence on scores of prisoners executed for the most trivial offences. At the top were power, pride, privilege, luxury and sensuality, at the bottom were oppression, poverty, disease, starvation and the slow rotting of millions. Any who deem this picture overdrawn must be referred to reliable histories of the period, or to the witness of men still living. And when suddenly the test came, this rigid and unjust military system was unable to defend itself against foreign aggression. The nation then had a rude awakening from its policy of trying to ignore

the present by idealizing and transforming the past

It was the influence of the intense interest created in nationalism by the revival of historical studies and now by the sudden impact with occidental civilization after two and a half centuries of seclusion that aroused Japan to the necessity of eliminating the shogunate by the restoration of imperial government and the introduction of modern knowledge. It is clear that the *Shinto* scholars who wrote against Confucian rationalism ultimately undermined the feudal usurpation represented by the shogunate, and when occidental nations began to insist on commercial intercourse with Japan the shogun proved quite incapable of dealing with the complications thus created. A system of government so obviously antiquated and incompetent could be no longer tolerable. The Wang philosophy had been teaching Japan for centuries that profession could be only tested by action, but of action the *bakufu* was incapable.

The gold rush to California in 1849 had rapidly peopled the Pacific coast of America, not only with land settlers, but also with sea-adventurers, and from the 278 whaling-ships that traversed the Pacific between California and the Russian littoral, many seamen had from time to time been wrecked on the shores of Japan, or driven there by contrary winds, or to seek food and water, some of whom had been barbarously treated and even murdered. The Washington authorities, determined to put a stop to this, despatched a fleet under Commodore Perry in 1853 to open the doors of Japan to more friendly intercourse, and at least conclude an agreement guaranteeing protection to United States nationals. The author had the privilege of knowing personally a member of the Perry expedition, and of learning from him what Japanese civilization was like seventy five years ago. For the details of Perry's experience in inducing Japan to open her doors, the reader must be referred to Japanese history. Suffice it here

to say that, after a year's official procrastination, the shogun was compelled to conclude an agreement with the United States. Other foreign nations soon arrived to claim and receive similar privileges, and in a few years foreigners began to pour into Japan, even before it was quite safe for them to be there, and their presence seriously embarrassed further diplomatic negotiations.

From 1854 to 1868 there was constant friction between foreigners and Japanese, for the treaties with Western nations were almost universally unpopular. The shogun had committed—under stress of circumstances, it is true—the unpardonable offence of signing agreements with foreign nations without either the imperial sanction or imprimatur, thus openly usurping imperial prerogative, and the nation had made up its mind that the *bakufu* régime must end. So wrought up was the nation, that both foreigners and Japanese were assassinated, including the shogun's prime minister, Lord Ii Kamon.

The nation had no conception of world relations; it was a civilization more concerned with rights than with duties, and so incapable of international relations. Japan had still to learn that rights are things that may sometimes have to be sacrificed for the sake of Right, while duties have to be respected and carried out by all classes at all times, even by nations. This idea, that rights are realities that sometimes have to be surrendered for the general good, was quite a new one to oriental civilization. In Japan the idea that rights have to be surrendered was never entertained, for none possessed rights but those in command of the power to enforce them. But the international obligations now imposed on Japan enabled her to learn that the nation, like the individual, that invariably insists on rights places itself in the centre of things, whereas in a true civilization service and duty must be at the centre, so that nations can hope for progress only as they are devoted to duties no less than rights.



Following the line of least resistance, the shogun, Keiki Tokugawa, showed the *samurai* spirit by suddenly abdicating his position and handing his authority and estates over to the emperor at Kyoto. As the 270 *daimyo* of the empire later were induced to follow the example of the shogun, this remarkable transition from a feudal to an imperial government has been called a "bloodless revolution." But it was not so sudden or so bloodless as it seemed, for the story of which the reader again must turn to Japanese history. It was not until the assassination of foreigners had forced foreign navies to bombard Japanese ports, and impose heavy indemnities, that the shogun resigned. Japan realized that the foreigners had come to stay, and that there was nothing for it but to accept the situation, and postpone rights and points of honour until later. Even after the resignation of the shogun in 1867, and the formal acceptance of the foreign treaties, the contest between *kinno* and *sobaku*, emperor and

shogun, was by no means ended, for the Tokugawa vassals were not ready thus easily to abandon the prestige and rights that for centuries they had enjoyed in association with so great a family, they believed that the shogun had been forced against his will to abandon his rights and privileges to his historic enemies, the three great southern clans, Satsuma, Choshu and Tosa, and so all his vassals were forced to share his humiliation and loss. It is true that the southern league, rankling under centuries of Tokugawa oppression, now arose and rallied around the emperor, and persuaded him to exclude northern influence from the new government. The breaking point came when the Aizu guards were replaced by southern substitutes at the imperial palace. The disgraced guards attacked the Satsuma men, and war between north and south began. The imperialists defeated the shogun's forces in the battle of Fushimi many thousands falling on both sides, and all the wounded were decapitated. By

protesting against this inhumanity, Dr Willis, surgeon at the British Legation who went out voluntarily to aid the wounded, left a lasting impression on Japanese civilization, for the offence has never been repeated. Though this victory decided the question whether Japan was to be ruled by feudal or imperial government, it did not settle the agitation against foreigners. At first it seemed as if the triumph of the imperialists meant not only the elimination of the shogunate, but of the foreigners and their treaties as well.

Two powerful parties were created the *sakoku*, who desired to expel the foreigners and return to national seclusion, and the *haikoku*, who favoured the observance of the treaties and the opening of the country to foreign trade and intercourse. Cries of *sakoku* and *haikoku* anti foreign and pro foreign, were rife on all sides. In time these party cries gave way to others the *fukoku* or conservative policy, advocating a return to the days before the shogunate, as against the *ishin* policy,

which called for radical reform and complete modernization of government and country. To steer a safe course between these noisy extremes was the difficult task of the new régime. How to organize a fundamentally new form of government on the basis of an antiquated tradition was a very puzzling problem for men without adequate experience. Up to this time government in Japan was not unlike that in France under the Merovingians, who nominally reigned, while the mayors of the palace governed the realm, and great feudatories, mostly jealous and mutually averse, lived in luxury throughout the land, and were loth to lose their ease and status. But the miracle happened; and not only did the 270 *daimyo* relinquish their rights and estates, but the more than 2,000,000 *samurai* agreed to abandon their rank and privilege, one of the most conspicuous examples of patriotism in history.

Nor would the revolution in restoration of imperial government in Japan have been as

bloodless as it turned out to be had the English-speaking nations not played so important and honourable a part in it. America opened Japan to foreign intercourse, and England lent all her powerful sympathy to the restoration of imperial government, the elimination of feudalism and the general modernization of commerce, industry and education. This attitude was vital at a time when conservatives and liberals in Japan were seeking foreign sympathy, and it was doubtful which side would win. One European Power even offered to send troops to restore the shogunate, but the Tokugawa vassals were too patriotic to accept foreign aid in a military way. The advice and influence of men like Sir Harry Parkes, the British minister, and of Mr Townsend Harris, the American minister, was of incalculable value in enabling Japan to establish a modern government, and in opening up the country to the sources of modern knowledge. Through many centuries Japanese civilization had been indebted

to China, India and Asia in general, as English civilization had been indebted to the Teutons Franks and the classic civilizations. In Japan now the two great divisions of human civilization came together to form a third, that hoped in some respects to embrace the virtues of both without their evils, an ideal that cannot, as yet, escape the charge of idealism.

That this rapid transition from a feudal to a modern civilization in Japan was due to no mysterious cause must already be apparent. The influences introduced by the Spanish and Portuguese missionaries and merchants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and by the Dutch and English in the latter century, could not wholly have evaporated during the more than two centuries of seclusion. Through the little Dutch colony at Deshima some light of Western knowledge continued to filter into the Japanese mind, for many scholars continued to acquire the Dutch language, and to read treatises on all subjects, especially on

religion and medicine. Religious books were prohibited, but they were not unknown. Scientific subjects naturally predominated. In the adventure after modern knowledge several scholars suffered execution. The general effect of Western influence on officialdom had been only to arouse suspicion of occidental nations, and to recommend neither religion nor civilization from that quarter. But when pressure came from the outside world, and the foreigners returned to Japan, the country fortunately had some leaders who saw that the only hope of Japan's survival in the modern world was to become modern. Not only did the young emperor eventually agree to issue an edict calling for a national constitution, with a parliament and, in time, a representative government, but he ordered the reorganization of all government and national institutions on modern lines: the army, the navy, all public utilities, education, industry, trade—all were to be reformed, and in all departments teachers were to be

sought from abroad to give instruction in modern knowledge

In this wonderful renaissance that has marked the course of Japanese civilization during the last half century the English language has been the chief medium, not only in the way of books and papers, but also through instructors using English speech. English is now regarded as the commercial and diplomatic language of the East. Its influence on Japanese character and culture has been very marked. In the greater number of national higher schools it is compulsory, and nearly all the higher officials in government, civil service, education, industry, commerce and the professions speak it. The influence of English literature is easily traceable on the literature of modern Japan, no less than on even the vernacular.

Immediately after the revolution of 1868 it was decided to transfer the national capital to Yedo, which had practically been the seat of government for so long, and the name was



the free gift of grace from a divine emperor, after the manner of Jehovah's covenant with Israel through Moses and the Law. Thus the Constitution, while modern in form, is feudal in spirit and operation. The Tokugawa domination was displaced by that of the southern clans, led by Satsuma, Choshu, Tosa and Iizen, but much modified in a liberal direction. The change did not mean, and could not mean, representative government in a modern sense. The elimination of clan influence will take long, and even then it may be replaced by the influence of bitterly diverse political parties and partisanship, which might be worse. The cloaking of ambitions and traditions, whether of persons or clans, under the guise of law or of institutions, is one of the oldest of Japanese devices, of which we have had evidence all through this review of Japanese civilization. It is agreeable to a society where personality has been accustomed to sink itself in institutions, the individual in the State, but it often means that form and

reality are quite different. The total population of the Japanese empire is about 84,000,000, of which some 70,000,000 are in Japan proper. Of these not more than 12,000,000 are entitled to the franchise. The manipulation of electoral constituencies by political parties is frequently corrupting. Clan interest is still powerful, the spirit of bureaucracy strong. The bureaucrats recognize the popular will, but they alone are competent to interpret that will. Yet the people have incomparably greater freedom and privilege than ever before, and justice is fairly administered.

In their sanity of aim to have no violent break with the civilization of the past, the leaders of new Japan are perhaps to be commended. Consequently the Constitution places the Throne at the head of the executive and legislative functions of the State, with power of absolute veto. The Throne can legislate without parliament, and has complete control over all civil and military

officials Hitherto the *genro*, or Elder Statesmen, consisting of retired veterans in political wisdom, has acted in an advisory capacity to the emperor, but the influence of the *genro* appears to be lessening with its numbers, for only a few remain, and the Privy Council is now a source of appeal when the emperor is puzzled by the conduct of his Cabinet. There is a persistent tendency, for utilitarian reasons, to accept the formal machinery of modern government, and modern civilization generally, without the spirit. The vice of nominality is prominent. Founded on the tradition, if not the conviction, that all government issues from, and is operated by, incarnate deity in the person of the sovereign, Japanese civilization remains a theocracy. Religion and patriotism are so wholly identical that Shinto is not nominally regarded as a religion, but simply as a mode of patriotism to keep the national mind in loyal touch with the ancestral gods from whom all the good and ill of life come. To

excite the disapproval of the gods is fraught with danger to the State. Although the gods have made the Japanese people without the need of a religion, or even of a moral code, history shows that, in Japan no less than elsewhere, religion has proved one of the greatest State building factors in the evolution of civilization. To deny that Shinto is a religion, while Shinto priests are offering prayers and sacrifices at the ancestral altars, is obviously absurd. The attitude may be due to the feeling that while patriotism is local and national, religion must have implications that are universal. The conviction that Shinto cannot be called a religion because it can never make a universal appeal is doubtless well founded, yet Japan is either depending on Shinto as a religion or else is doing without religion altogether. If the science of comparative religion be any guide, Shinto is a religion, but if it is a religion devoid of universal application, will it meet the needs of a modern nation? Nichiren, the great

Buddhist reformer of the thirteenth century and called the Luther of Japan, proclaimed the necessity of all nations coming under one moral law, but he was persecuted, and barely escaped with his head

If it is thus difficult for Japanese civilization to recognize any clear distinction between religion and nationalism, there is still greater difficulty in distinguishing between society and the State. The difference between social and political institutions is apparently not admitted. In all countries, of course, these influences may overlap and blend, but their functions are admittedly different. Our relations to society are more or less voluntary, our relations to the State are not. In Western civilization all institutions are associated with ethical ideas, even the State is an ethical idea. The implication is that progress depends much on personality, on character, even more than on the mere machinery of civilization. In Japan this aspect of progress will demand more attention as time goes on.

Already there is evidence of increasing dissatisfaction with current ethical standards, particularly in the national education system, which is purely secular, religion being excluded. The attempt to establish ethics on a materialistic basis has not succeeded in Japan any more than elsewhere. Nor does it harmonize with the national faith in the State as a theocracy. The confusion is doubtless due to the traditional divorce between ethics and religion. In the past religion was regarded as no more than a device to escape the penalties of the gods, it had nothing to do with the moral improvement of man. Even the immoral could be extremely religious. Faced with grave political, social and industrial problems, Japan feels the need of more efficient moral safeguards. Not only national, but also Christian ethics are now taught in the schools.

In modern Japan the old aristocracy of blood is fast becoming subordinate to the new aristocracy of wealth created by industry, trade and shipping. The population, long

accustomed to have the inferior sink his interests in those of the superior, yet finds its new industrial masters less considerate than the old feudal lords. The feudalism of capital is even more relentless than the feudalism of rank and caste. Money is much more powerful in the new than it was in the old Japan of the *samurai*, who was taught to despise money and all who lived for it. This is one of the more serious aspects of the incidence of occidentalism. It was too easily assumed that once the trail was blazed, all Japan had to do was to follow in the political, commercial, industrial and ethical footsteps of occidental nations. May not the senior wrangler travel where Newton has led the way, though few senior wranglers are Newtons? Japan soon acquired all that occidental nations could teach in the way of political and mechanical contrivance, without acquiring the character that produced these, and that so largely controls them where they were invented. Japan has to learn that institutions must rest

on ethical ideals, and that it is easier to acquire the institutions than the ideals. To obtain the machine is one thing, while to run it properly is quite another.

In such sciences as chemistry, physics, bacteriology, surgery, engineering, seismology, naval architecture and the usual arts and crafts Japan has already shown high achievement, if small originality and less philosophy. But the distinctive genius of the national psychology is to be more concerned with action than with thought. Japan has a great capacity for organization, even if more intuitive than reasoned, which, both in war and peace, has been long proficient. Yet tradition and custom, rather than ethical considerations, determine too much the direction and use of wealth. The assassin often selects his victims from members of the plutocracy. Japan is both prospering and suffering from her impact with Western civilization, as was equally the case after her first contact with China. But in her



rivalry with the West, Japan has the consolation that a lower form of civilization, in robust vigour and determination, has a more hopeful future than a higher civilization in process of exhaustion or decay from over-elaboration and excess. Compared with the Romans, the Huns were mere barbarians, but the future lay with the Huns. The present *laissez faire* attitude of the West towards the East is bound to have a rude awakening some day. It is not enough to have high ideals and a vast inheritance of wealth and culture; wisdom is also essential. History shows that it is the rate of progress that tries the patience of the good, but not of the also wise. The children of this world are often wiser in their generation than the children of light. If the West should be disposed to despise the East as a mere imitation of the West, it is because the West has forgotten that the majority of progressive folk spend their time in imitation rather than in invention. Our pupils often beat us at our own game.

The spirit behind the means is more important than the means, if the end is to be *desirable*. While the West is exhausting the resources of science and wealth in the invention of new weapons of exploitation and destruction, and religion is more concerned with forms and artificial sins than with reality and the improvement of society, the East is toiling and forging ahead, putting on mental and moral muscle, determined to beat the West at its own game, and avoid the penalties that can only be avoided by avoiding the sins that involve them.

The rise and progress of civilization in Japan proves that the gods are on the side of those who work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Along with the physical, material, mental and social evolution, there has always been evidence of an ethical impulse from some latent force peculiar to man in contrast with the brutes, tending to counteract the laws of organic nature in the interest of civilization. It was only in proportion as

society could recognize and obey the higher impulse that progress was assured. The degree of weakness in any civilization is just in proportion to the degree in which this higher spirit fails to become incarnate in society. The story of every chapter in the record is that of the importance of leadership and personality in civilization. A nation of hero worshippers, like the Japanese, is unlikely to ignore the necessity of great leaders. It has long been the demand of the nation's more thoughtful minds. *The danger is lest the nation be misled by wrong leadership, through ignorance of what constitutes true greatness.* Will he that is greatest in Japan prove the servant of all?

Perhaps Japan is less exposed than are some other nations to the danger of abandoning her future to an ignorant democracy. She believes, even more implicitly than either Plato or Carlyle, in an aristocracy of intelligence and culture, for China has unconsciously taught her that the fate of mere democracy is to become communistic and stationary. If

adequate leadership be necessary in politics, finance and industry, it is still more essential in national ethics and society. But in a civilization where poverty forces material considerations to ignore ethical values, a nation would not be likely to command greater leaders were they to be chosen by the masses of the people. Japan's need is the consecration of wealth and education to the production of great personalities, to lead the nation in safe paths. In this way Christianity is exercising an influence above that of the other religious forces in the country. There is perfect agreement with St. Paul that the powers that be "are ordained of God and consequently must be obeyed as God." This all pervasive principle only makes it all the more imperative that the powers that be shall be godly.

Japan is still, for the most part, a land of peasants accustomed to regard their masters as representatives of the gods, and to submit to feudal regimentation. This becomes less true

as time goes on, of course, but it still obtains for all practical purposes. Freed, as the people have been, from serfdom and crass injustice, under a modern government, the change is so paradisaical in contrast to even fifty years ago that there is little unrest compared with the more advanced civilizations of the occident. Agrarian disturbance is seldom, and always superficial, local and limited. Though strikes are illegal, agitation in industry often erupts into riot and disorder, but only where conditions are unendurable. The strikes that have become such an increasing feature of Japanese industry are due mainly to Western influence urging resentment against an exploitation of labour to an extent now impossible in Western civilization, and such outbursts often result in violence fatal to life and property. But the masses generally are still disposed to trust their masters in a filial spirit, while the spirit of paternalism prevails the whole realm of officialdom and capitalism. Unaccustomed

to individual responsibility, the average worker is prone to rely on authority rather than be treated as a person. Signs of a changing attitude of mind in this respect are not wanting here and there, owing to the advancement of education and the modernization of industry. Whether the general industrialization of the country now in process with consequent congestion of urban population and emergence of slums, will lead to improvement of civilization again depends on the spirit of leadership.

A menacing feature of the industrial revolution is the rapid transition from æsthetic creation to artificial or mechanical production, which is a hindrance to art and possibly to civilization. The studio is forced to give place to the factory, and individual handiwork to wholesale output. The average Japanese, unlike the Chinese is an artist by disposition, rather than an artisan, he does not care to be occupied in copying or making many things just alike. Nowhere is the paradoxical aspect of Japanese psychology more apparent than

in accusing a nation of artists of being a nation of imitators. In the old days the artistic craftsman worked for a feudal master who did not trouble him so long as he created beautiful or useful things. He did not have to worry about earning a living. But to day, artist and craftsman alike have to toil for a living, not also for love of the craft. In being obliged to concentrate on making numberless duplicates of saleable articles he lacks the wholesome inspiration of a task that demands special concentration and creative sensibility. All human handiwork has value not only in the thing made, but also in the degree that it enables the maker to realize that thereby the purpose of his life is being fulfilled. Here the national psychology is suffering more than in the naturally industrial and less æsthetic West, though there also the loss to civilization is evident.

We know that preoccupation with material things need not necessarily imply materialistic ideals, neither for the worker nor for civiliza-

tion It is the purpose to which things are devoted that determines the ethical character of the individuals that compose society By many orientals Western civilization is looked upon as essentially materialistic, yet a much larger proportion of occidental wealth goes to altruistic purposes than is the case in Asia The East may live at a lower tension and keep a more even balance between the active and contemplative faculties than the West, but the East seems unable to overcome its abounding poverty, which in some measure must be the result of moral and intellectual poverty The patience that is patient of inertia is unwholesome and futile The necessity for wise and intelligent action is not an illusion but a fact fundamental to progress, and therefore to civilization By inducing a general acquiescence in things as they are, and ought not to be, oriental religions have retarded the development of civilization, leaving action too much to military and avaricious ambition



The unexampled progress of civilization in Japan since the imperial restoration has been too much under the pressure of official paternalism to be wholly or even wholesomely spontaneous. To impose a new civilization on an ancient and alien culture is naturally a gigantic undertaking, and Japan can only be admired and commended for attempting it, and having so well succeeded in accomplishing it. Could the achievement have been realized without losing some of the virtues of either civilization, it would be nothing short of a miracle.

Japan is wont to pride herself on never having been vanquished by a foreign foe. But peace has her victories no less glorious than war. And the most glorious victory possible to peace is the victory of a higher over a lower civilization. From such a victory Japan has greatly benefited. As Japan yielded to the superior influence of Chinese civilization, and the Buddhist religion in the centuries past, so is she now

yielding no less nobly to the transformation and rejuvenation that Western civilization and the Christian religion are bringing about for her. True to her genius, however, Japan is not so much adopting as she is adapting the new influences and their ideals to her own conceptions of civilization. Situated at the confluence of the two main streams of world civilization, Japan is the first country in which the civilizations of the East and the West have harmoniously blended. Already Japanese leaders are claiming that their country has a mission to mankind, and that Japan is to be the unifier of humanity. But not yet has Japan succeeded in having all the gods of all the nations agree, even on her own soil, nor have their religions yet ceased to exchange maledictions. But the principles of *kokutai*, involving the esoteric realities of Heaven, Earth and Man are effectively at work. More than any other nation, Japan is hastening the day when we shall no longer speak of civilizations, but of civilization, for in so far as

civilization becomes a fusion of what is best in all civilizations does it represent what is universal in character and appeal. Races and nations must doubtless always have the virtue of their individual expressions of truth, but truth itself must be wider than either race or nationality.

Consequently the clash between old and new in Japanese civilization is intense and often menacing. Whether the contest is always between the false and the true is a vital question. How to shield the gossamer web of Shinto superstition from crude impact with the modern world of science is a task both delicate and difficult. Japan almost every year has her Galileos, though they have to suffer less than they did half a century ago. But so long as distinguished scholars have to suffer loss of status, and have their works consigned to the flames, simply for upholding scientific truth, there is a dangerous degree of intolerance in the civilization. Officialdom is not mistaken in believing that if the thought of a

nation is to be controlled, it must be through education, the schools are the makers of nations and of their civilizations. In Japan, education is controlled strictly in the interests of nationalism, and all contrary thought is condemned as dangerous and even poisonous. Provision for the suppression of all forms of dangerous thought is perfect. Bolshevism, communism and even socialism are strictly prohibited. All ideas inconsistent with nationalist piety are penalized, if detected. But the examples of frequent conflict with authority that mark the course of labour and of university study imply a grave lack of unanimity as to what is and what is not nationally poisonous. If poison be not without its uses in physical therapeutics, it may have its uses also in political, mental and moral healing, it all depends on whether used rightly or wrongly. In Japan, thought is always tested by its power to promote national interest. The ideal is reasonable, the practice not always so.

There is in Japan a very general conviction

that civilization is now facing distinctly in the direction of progress. On every side there is ample evidence of improvement, material, mental and moral, both in the individual and in the mass. All the utilities of modern civilization have been introduced, even if not always effectively used, and only poverty prevents their universal application. Science is universally taught, and is operating in all its aspects, often to the confusion of nationalism, applied science is only too often for those who can afford to command its services. In government, law, education, art, industry, religion and general knowledge, there is steady extension. The health, peace, happiness and general welfare of the people are now matters of public responsibility. Privilege in regard to the common requirements of civilized life is resented. This is not to say that Japan yet finds it as easy to control the forces of nature and the benefits of invention in the interests of man as in the interest of wealth and class. The control of the

dispositions of men in the public or common interest remains the most fundamental factor in progress. It is a moral question, concerned mainly with the will. How to command an unselfish exercise of talent and opportunity for the good of the whole of society is the problem.

The greater emancipation of woman in Japan as compared with the rest of Asia, is one of the most encouraging aspects of the new civilization, as well as being one of its most significant fruits. The degree to which civilization has advanced in any age may quite legitimately be estimated by the position assigned to woman. The character of a nation's womanhood is an index of its civilization. In woman, as wife and mother, inheres the moral achievement of the race. Society is low and primitive in proportion as privileges are for men and prohibitions for women. Japan is fast moving away from the days when woman was not consulted as to her marriage nor entitled to undisputed possession of her husband's affections. But the dazzling

type of female beauty is still too often the courtesan, who, as the queen of beauty, is chosen to adorn public functions and even to lead municipal and religious processions. But there is everywhere a growing aversion from the prostitution of female beauty, which has been such a drag on the civilization of the past. Generally speaking, woman in Japan is now accorded most of the rights she enjoys in Western countries: she can inherit property, become the head of a family, can sue for divorce, and attend political meetings. Her enfranchisement is still distant. Naturally she is the leader in the campaign against licensed vice, on which the nation expends so many millions annually, and from which the Treasury draws so considerable a revenue.

What Japan, no less than other nations, has to realize, is that the future lies with the civilization that can combine the best that all civilizations have contributed, and thus become an incarnation of the higher ethical principles on which the moral evolution of mankind

depends. If progress is to be ethical, there must be evidence of an increasing reverence for human life. Herein is the spirit on which a civilization can adequately build. The only civilization fit to survive is that which sees good in all that assists and enhances human life, and evil in all that hinders, harms and destroys it. Here Japan is as dependent as other nations on the Christian contribution to her civilization. The 700,000 Christians of the empire already exercise an ethical influence out of all proportion to their numbers, and must eventually, in their steady increase, grow to be a powerful element in the moral transformation of society. In all forms of altruistic enterprise they have been the leaders, and here their example has been widely followed. The Church promises to become as great an influence in the transformation of Japanese civilization as Buddhism was from the sixth century onwards. But it will require more than two or three generations, it must reckon its hopes and fruits in the patience



of the centuries, and should not be diverted by compromise from its true aim, to snatch at temporary advantage and opportunity.

Under the impetus of Christian activity Buddhism has been incited to wholesome rivalry, and in recent years has experienced a definite awakening to fresh effort and energy in imitation of missionary zeal and propaganda, even to the adopting of hymns, sermons, catechisms and young people's societies to attract the rising generation, to say nothing of the numerous forms of philanthropic work under temple auspices. Buddha is being preached as a saviour, and salvation by faith offered in his name. The religions of Japan are becoming gradually imbued with the spirit of all religion, so far as it is based on truth, namely, the uplift and triumph of humanity over all forms of evil, especially that which hinders goodwill between man and man. The foundation of all law, order, peace and progress is the impulse to act humanly; for civilization is the humanization of society.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ASTON, W. G. : *Nihongi*. 2 vols. London, 1897.  
 — *History of Japanese Literature*.  
 BRINKLEY, F. : *The Art of Japan*. 2 vols. 1901.  
 — *Japan and China*. 12 vols.  
 — "Japan," *Encyclopædia Britannica* 11th ed.  
 CHAMBERLAIN, B. H. : "The Kojiki," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*.  
 — *Things Japanese*.  
 GUBBINS, J. : *The Progress of Japan*.  
 — *The Making of New Japan*.  
 GULICK, S. : *Evolution of Japan* 1903  
 HEARN, Lafcadio : *Japan, An Interpretation*.  
 HARRISON, E. J. : *The Fighting Spirit of Japan*. 2 vols. 1912.  
 KIKUCHI, Baron : *Japanese Education*. 1909.  
 LLOYD, Arthur. *The Creed of Half Japan* 1910.  
 LONGFORD, Joseph : *Japan of the Japanese*.  
 — *Evolution of New Japan* 1923  
 — *Japan*, in "The Nations of To-day" Series, 1923  
 McLAREN, W. W. : *Political History of Japan in Meiji Era* 1916.  
 MURDOCH, James. *A History of Japan*. 3 vols. 1927.  
 NIHOE, Inazo : *The Japanese Nation*. 1912  
 OKAKURA, Y. : *The Spirit of Japan*. 1913.  
 — *The Life and Thought of Japan*. 1910.  
 OKAKURA, K. : *The Awakening of Japan* 1904  
 OKUMA, Prince. *Fifty Years of New Japan*. 2 vols. 1909  
 PORTER, R. P. : *Japan, The Rise of a Modern Power*. 1918  
 REISCHAUER, A. K. : *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*.  
 SCOTT, W. J. R. : *The Foundations of Japan*. 1922  
*Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*  
*Transactions of The Japan Society, London*  
*Volumes of The Japan Magazine, 1910 to 1920, edited by Dr. J. Ingram Bryan*

# INDEX

- ABORIGINES 39 45 50 65 117  
     119  
 Adams Will 196  
 Aesthetics, 107 41  
 Africa 27 34  
 Agriculture, 84, 120 134  
 Ainu 40 44, 46  
 Alphabet, 88  
 Anarchy 109  
 Animals 85  
 Anthropology, 28 49  
 Archæology 28, 40 49  
 Architecture 91 119 143  
 Aristocracy 17 161  
 Arnold, Matthew 1  
 Arrow heads, 50  
 Art, 82, 85 143 204  
 Aryan 87  
 Ashikaga 155 167 170  
 Avatars, 208  
  
 Bakufu, 190 194, 197 203 215,  
     217  
 Bambatsū 34 58  
 Bandits 135 169  
 Barbarism 22, 39  
 Barber, 93  
 Bella, 50 107 120 211  
 Brinkley, F. 24  
 British East India Company 196  
 British influence 213  
 Bronze, 61  
 Brothels, 169  
 Buddhism 7, 32, 77, 80, 84 91  
     99, 107, 109, 114 126, 191  
     201 254 philosophy of 200  
     209  
 Buké 13  
 Burma cracy 227  
 Bushido, 154 160 188  
  
 Cabinet, 156  
 Cho-no-yu, 172  
 Chastity 77  
 Chikanatsū 204  
 China, 16 32, 35, 37 41, 46, 60,  
     83 7 93, 102 philosophy  
     of 201  
 Chodensu, 172  
  
 Christianity 181 194 245, 251  
 Climate 17  
 Clothing 45 172  
 Codes law 94  
 Commerce 93  
 Concubinage 116 177 185  
 Confucianism 30 37 71 104  
     153 165 193 199  
 Constitution national 227 229  
 Cosmogony, 40, 49  
 Cost ne 91 92, 142, 172  
 Crime, degrees of 193  
 Crucifixion, 180 193  
  
 Dalbutau, Nara, 107  
 Daiho code, 104  
 Daikwa code 94 101  
 Daimyo 137 157 176 186, 219  
     222  
 Dai Nihonshi 203  
 Deification of ruler 36  
 Dettles 60 73 123  
 Democracy, 233  
 Dengyo Isaki 129  
 Divorce 20  
 Dolmens 35, 42 82  
 Drama, 204  
 Drunkenness, 160 179  
 Dutch settlement, 194 224  
  
 Ear-language, 88  
 Education, 45  
 Egypt influence 29 36 92 127  
 F der Matesmen 230  
 England, 193  
 English language influence of  
     6  
 Equality sex 47  
 Eta class, 65  
 Ethics 26 207, 232, 237  
 Europeans, 175  
 Extirpation of natives, 45  
 Eye-language 85  
  
 Family 57 61  
 Fam tree E 100 171 199 212  
 Fashima, W., 142  
 Feudalism, 183 169 161  
 Franchise 204

- Fudai daimyo 187  
 Fujiwara, 101 104 111 117 124  
     131 150  
 Genji clan, 151  
 Genji Monogatari 145  
 Genro, 230  
 Ghosticism 179  
 Gosankei 101  
 Hachiman 82  
 Hanami, 140  
 Harem, 72, 75 179  
 Harris, Townsend 223  
 Hegel, 56  
 Hero worship 163 170 181  
 Heike clan 163  
 Heredity 71 117  
 Hideoyoshi, 150 177 181 2  
 Hinayana, 206  
 Hirohito 60  
 Ho-o 113  
 Hogen tumult, 150  
 Hojo family 154 163 165  
 Hojok 144  
 Homicide 46  
 Ieyasu, 154 184  
 Ikebana 172  
 Illusion 79 708  
 Imitation 70 236  
 India, 70 3 37 81  
 Industry 233 740  
 Inquisition 15 145  
 Insel 113 13  
 Invasions, 42, 133  
 Isanagi 4  
 Iseami 4  
 Izumo 19 72  
 Japan's mission, 745  
 Jesuits, 178 180  
 Jewellery 51 90  
 Jiden manors, 137  
 Jimmu Tenna, 23, 43  
 Jingo, Emperor 54 76  
 Justice 96 103 714  
 Kamakura, 155 163  
 Kamatari 58  
 Kanakusha 701  
 Kanishin 110  
 Kataribe, 40  
 Karma, 79 124 211  
 Kano 700  
 Kiyomori, 151  
 Kojiki, 35 41 45, 121  
 Kokinshu 146  
 Kokutai 49 740  
 Korea 19 39 53 54 63 76 100,  
     118, 180  
 Kugé 135  
 Kwampaku 130 177  
 Kwobetsu 43 53  
 Kyoto 176 187  
 Kyushu 54 59 180  
 Laissez faire 236  
 Language (Japanese) 30 88 146  
 Law 55 93 38 130  
 Legacy of Ieyasu 191  
 Literature 122, 124 140 144  
     173 703 2 5  
 Longford Joseph 24  
 Loyalty 69 74 160 200  
 Mabuchi 201  
 Mahayana 206  
 Makibi 110  
 Makura no sode 140 145  
 Malaya 70 3 53 53  
 Manpuku 121 174  
 Marriage 61 70  
 Martyrdom of Christians 1 9 19  
 Materialism 74  
 Metals 83 143  
 Minamoto, 111 111 117 125 150  
 Mizenkumi 703  
 Modesty 70  
 Monarchy 68 163  
 Money 93  
 Monzella, 38 48  
 Monzola, 19 163  
 Monks, 113, 174 179  
 Mora 70  
 Motoori 701  
 Murasaki Shikibu 145  
 Murdoch, James, 24  
 M. c. 90 140 711  
 Mythology 70 41 47  
 Nara 80 106 125  
 Nationalism 733  
 Nationalist scholars 201  
 Nature 1 3 144  
 Nengo 69  
 Neo this period 49 51  
 Nestorianism, 115  
 Nihongi 35 41 7 171  
 Nihonshiki, 03  
 Norito 56  
 Occupations, 63  
 Oda Nobunaga, 155 174

- Ordeal, boiling water 47  
 Origin of Japanese 24
- Painting, 85  
 Parkes Sir Harry 223  
 Penalties 64 98 193  
 Perry Commodore 216  
 Pestilence 37 47  
 Phallicism, 77  
 Philosophy 200-9  
 Pirates, 64 174  
 Plato 56 238  
 Poetry 68 121  
 Polyzamy 68  
 Polytheism 114 207  
 Population 113 209  
 Portuguese 175 204  
 Pottery 50 85 119  
 Priest-king 70  
 Primogeniture 70
- Race influence of 26 29  
 Rationalism 215  
 Religion 56 62, 77 131, 134  
 231 245
- Sacred Treasure 48  
 Sacrifice human 73 74  
 Saikwa 202  
 Saimurai 64 117 135 180 157,  
 160 190 207  
 Savagery 44 63  
 Sculpture 143  
 Sea influence of 19  
 Sekizahara 185  
 Sericulture 85  
 Shiden manors, 136  
 Shimbetsu, 43 58  
 Shingon sect 129  
 Shi no-ko-sho, 158  
 Shinto 71 90 109 202, 231 246  
 Ships, 68 90, 138  
 Shoen manors 136  
 Shogun 153  
 Shoshidai 187  
 Shoto-in, 89  
 Shotoku, Prince 100  
 Showa era, 89  
 Silk, 47 147  
 Slavery 46 103, 117  
 Society, 46 162, 172, 174 192,  
 193, 204 214  
 Soga family 58 100 111  
 Spain, 195
- Sports, 90 141 174  
 Strikes, 240  
 Sugawara Michizane 133  
 Suicide 46  
 Superstition, 115 128  
 Syllabary 87
- Tachibana Hiromi 133  
 Taiko 177  
 Taira clan 58 117 135 150  
 Tanka 89  
 Taxation, 65 110 128 137 157,  
 166  
 Tenchōsetsu 118  
 Tendai sect, 129  
 Tenshi, 43  
 Toi tribe 138  
 Tokugawa 165  
 Tokyo 89, 271  
 Tomōbō 64 117, 159  
 Torture 97 98, 214  
 Tosa Nukki, 146  
 Torama dai-myō, 187  
 Turano-African influence 3
- Uji, 63 66  
 United States 216  
 Universals 209  
 Ural Altaic influence 34
- Vassalage, 161  
 Vendetta 76  
 Vice 71 160
- Wado, 41  
 Wagakusha 201  
 Wang philosophy, 215  
 Woman 60 146 202, 249  
 Writing 86
- Xavier Francis 170
- Yamashiro, Prince 100  
 Yamato, 20, 22, 40, 44 45 51 53  
 Yedo, 185 186 199 226  
 Yoritomo 151 155 163  
 Yoshimasa, 171  
 Yoshitsuné, 151  
 Yozai, 141
- Zazen 159 207  
 Zen sect, 159 207  
 Zip-pah-gu, 41